

A
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

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PERIOD V.
IMPERIAL REACTION
VICTORIA
1880 - 1901

With Maps and Plans

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PREFACE.

A PREFACE to a Fifth Volume may seem superfluous, yet a few words are wanted to introduce and perhaps excuse the appearance of a book treating of events of such very recent date. So close is the connection binding the events of history that it is always difficult to make a choice (which must in any case be arbitrary) of stopping-places to form what it is usual to call the beginnings or endings of periods. In writing contemporaneous history, the difficulty is accentuated by the very obvious character of this continuity. It is plain that the year 1880 cannot in any sense be regarded as such a stopping-place: the facts are incomplete, the stream of political opinion continues unchecked, and the prominent figures are the same both before and after. On the other hand, the death of Queen Victoria seems to afford an opportunity of more than usual fitness for bringing the story of the fortunes of Great Britain to a conclusion. Not only is the close of the long reign and the death of a great sovereign in itself something of an era, it so happens that in this case it synchronizes with a real change of scene. The new reign has begun with different actors on the stage, and different objects of public interest. The old generation of statesmen has passed away. The grave has closed over the fiery will and entralling eloquence of Mr. Gladstone, and the cool sagacity and experience of Lord Salisbury. Lord Goschen, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. John Morley have withdrawn from the leadership of parties; the high offices of State are filled by comparatively young men.

PREFACE

It is no longer Ireland which occupies the forefront in political warfare ; its place has for the time been taken by the question of fiscal reform, hurriedly brought into prominence, but which is only one instance of the general tendency to bring all the old received opinions afresh to the touchstone. The reaction and backward swing of the pendulum, the periodical recurrence of which is an historical commonplace, has in fact set in.

It is scarcely possible to dignify these concluding chapters, or probably any narration of contemporary events and opinions, with the title of history. The passage of years is necessary to winnow the wheat from the chaff, to distinguish in the midst of the chaotic confusion of authorities and memories the points which are of real historic value. The writer wades hopelessly amid the flood of Blue-books, reports, newspaper articles, magazines, and political speeches. He is further hampered by his own recollections, and in danger of regarding as all-important the ephemeral quarrels of party which have filled the world with their clamour to the exclusion of the weightier principles that underlay them. The most that he can hope to achieve with any chance of success is to give such a consecutive and simple narrative of the facts, grouped as far as possible around certain leading lines of thought, as shall render them intelligible and assist the memory in retaining them.

Nor are such centres of grouping difficult to find ; an idea had already been launched, by which the whole movement of affairs both at home and abroad was profoundly influenced. Though the word Imperialism means different things to different men, the unity of the British empire in one form or another may be regarded as the dominating factor of political conduct. Openly, or by unrecognised influence, it has shaped the whole political life of the time. Its ramifications supply what may for the present at least be taken as the historical framework on which the events can be arranged. The magnificent efforts of the great statesman who devoted the closing years of his long life to the cause of Ireland resulted

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in failure, before the firm opposition of the upper and middle classes of England to any slackening of the union between the British Isles. A new party line was thus drawn; and a Conservative party, profoundly modified by the influence of its Liberal allies but strong in its one principle of union, obtained and succeeded in keeping the reins of power. The great wave of Liberal progress, which had on the whole swept on unbroken since the passing of the Reform Bill, was checked. The extreme Liberals, whose forms of thought had been gradually leavening the policy of Great Britain, robbed of the support of their moderate leaders, found themselves called upon to meet legislation in which their own ideas were re-cast in a Conservative mould. It is not always easy to trace the influence of the Imperial idea in the careful and sagacious diplomacy of Lord Salisbury. His peace-loving and somewhat cynical character did not lend itself to the rasher enthusiasms of the time; but his experienced skill, aided by his great European reputation, enabled him to bring the country through several awkward difficulties without the sacrifice of any of the dignity of the Empire. It was however in the relation of Great Britain to the Colonies that the strength of Imperialism made itself chiefly visible. In the hands of Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Office assumed quite a new position of importance. Not only was territorial expansion furthered and dormant claims brought to realization, but Federation among the Colonies themselves with a view to some ultimate form of federated empire was actively supported. That such a policy should necessitate sooner or later an appeal to force was almost a matter of course: the long and costly war in South Africa was but one of its inevitable results.

It is thus around the Irish question, the reconstruction of parties, a Conservative legislation infused with Liberal ideas, a temperate but imperial foreign policy, and an unprecedented advance in the importance of the Colonies, that the facts of the time seem chiefly to centre. While the writer has emphasised these several points, he has thought it better for

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the sake of uniformity to follow the arrangement adopted in his previous volumes and to use the successive Ministries as the formal divisions of the narrative. He makes no claim to special knowledge; no authorities have been used which are not open to any one who desires to study them. The facts mentioned have been as far as possible verified by reference to public sources. In future years it would be possible to write a history of a very different description. Documents and correspondence at present inaccessible will then be open to the world. Biographies and monographs will supply details at present unknown. A truer perspective, a more real appreciation of the value of facts, will be arrived at.

Of necessity in a work of this description the omissions have been very large. It is hoped that enough has been said to give to the readers for whom it is intended a fair if slight view of the events of real importance which marked the close of the great Queen's reign.

J. F. B.

OXFORD, *February 4, 1904.*

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VICTORIA (*continued*).

1837 to 1901.

CHAPTER I.

MR. GLADSTONE'S MINISTRY, April 28, 1880, to June 12, 1885.

THE CABINET.

<i>First Lord of the Treasury,</i>	. . .	Mr. Gladstone.
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer,</i>	. . .	Mr. Gladstone.
" " "	. . .	Mr. Childers (Dec. 1882).
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>	. . .	Lord Selborne.
<i>President of the Council,</i>	. . .	Earl Spencer.
" " "	. . .	Lord Carlingford (Dec. 1882).
<i>Lord Privy Seal,</i>	. . .	Duke of Argyll.
" " "	. . .	Lord Carlingford (April 1881).
" " "	. . .	Lord Rosebery (Jan. 1885).
<i>Home Secretary,</i>	. . .	Sir William Harcourt.
<i>Colonial Secretary,</i>	. . .	Lord Kimberley.
" " "	. . .	Lord Derby (Dec. 1882).
<i>Foreign Secretary,</i>	. . .	Lord Granville.
<i>War Secretary,</i>	. . .	Mr. Childers.
" " "	. . .	Lord Hartington (Dec. 1882).
<i>Indian Secretary,</i>	. . .	Lord Hartington.
" " "	. . .	Lord Kimberley (Dec. 1882).
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty,</i>	. . .	Lord Northbrook.
<i>President of the Board of Trade,</i>	. . .	Mr. Chamberlain.
<i>Postmaster-General,</i>	. . .	Mr. Fawcett.
<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,</i>	. . .	Mr. Bright.
" " "	. . .	Mr. Dodson (Dec. 1882).
" " "	. . .	Mr. Trevelyan (Oct. 1884).
<i>President of Local Government Board,</i>	. . .	Mr. Dodson.
" " "	. . .	Sir Charles Dilke (Dec. 1882).
<i>Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,</i>	. . .	Earl Cowper.
" " "	. . .	Earl Spencer (May 1882).
<i>Chief Secretary for Ireland,</i>	. . .	Mr. Forster.
" " "	. . .	Mr. Trevelyan (May 1882).
" " "	. . .	Mr. Campbell-Bannerman (Oct. 1884).

THE attempt to throw into a historical form the events of a period so near at hand as that which opens with the elections of 1880 is beset with difficulties almost insuperable. The writer who attempts it finds himself struggling in the midst of an enormous mass of contemporary documents, and, still worse, contemporary comments generally of an ephemeral or party character. The lights flashed from all sides upon the scene entirely disturb the

perspective. Matters of no importance in their influence upon the real stream of history occupy a space wholly disproportionate to their proper claims. Personal questions, personal views, political passions, and individual opinions, which have formed the subject of many months of heated controversy, themselves worthless and uncertain, are apt to put on the appearance of the very groundwork of that national life which is being described. After all has been carefully considered, the writer knows full well that there are extant masses of letters and private memoranda to which he cannot obtain access, but which, were they made public, as many of them will hereafter be, might overthrow any conclusion at which he may have arrived. There is the constant risk of sinking into the mere annalist, or, what is even worse, of obtruding the crude thought of the moment under the assumed form of proved fact or well-supported generalisation; while over all there lies an ever-present consciousness that there is no single fact of which he makes mention with which many men still living are not much better acquainted than the writer himself. It is not without much misgiving that the narrative of Queen Victoria's reign is now resumed.

Though the General Election of 1880 had given an overwhelming majority to the Liberal party, it was not at the moment certain to whom the formation of the Ministry would be entrusted. Lord Hartington had shown much ability as leader of the Opposition, and his speeches before and during the election had been of a weight and excellence surpassing the general expectation. But it was felt on all sides that the reappearance of Mr. Gladstone in the active field of politics, and the excitement caused by his Midlothian speeches, had been the chief cause of the sweeping reaction; a Ministry without him seemed, under the circumstances, impossible, and he could scarcely serve in a Ministry of which he was not the head. The Queen, with her careful regard for constitutional precedent, could not avoid sending in the first place for Lord Hartington; but it was soon known that he had advised her to ask Mr. Gladstone to undertake once again the duties of Premier, and that her offer had been accepted.

The first condition of a progressive Liberal party is the existence within it of a section of reformers, much in advance of the more sober and experienced men of which its bulk consists. Such men had played a conspicuous part in the struggle which had resulted in the complete swing of the political pendulum. The greatness of his majority left Mr. Gladstone much freedom of choice, and considerable interest was felt as to the share in the new Ministry which would be

**Mr. Gladstone's
Ministry.
April 1880.**

allotted to the advanced wing of the party. The first appointments published made it evident that he was not inclined to reorganise the party by the admission of the ultra-Liberals to the Cabinet, but was determined to rely upon his old supporters. Lord Granville for foreign affairs, Lord Hartington for India, Lord Northbrook at the Admiralty, Mr. Childers at the War Office, Mr. Forster as Irish Secretary, and Lord Selborne as Lord Chancellor, were the first names announced. But a notable addition was made when two men, destined to play a very prominent part in subsequent political history, were added to the Cabinet—Sir William Vernon Harcourt as Secretary for the Home Department, and Mr. Chamberlain as President of the Board of Trade.

There was an obvious danger that the enthusiasm which had produced such striking results at the election would be followed by a chill of disappointment when the Ministry came face to face with the difficulties with which it was surrounded. Already, before the opening of Parliament, it had been necessary to sound a note of warning. Even Mr. Chamberlain had felt called upon to point out to his Radical friends that they must not expect a Government in which all shades of Liberal opinion were represented to work as quickly as its most eager members might desire. The creation of such a Government in itself implied compromise.

Inevitable disappointment of the Radicals.

With regard to the general policy of the new Government, both its supporters and its adversaries expected that it would largely reverse the action of its predecessors. It had been largely recalled to power by the exertions of men who saw with strong dislike the development of an imperial temper in the national relations, both with other countries and with the Colonies. Yet it was contrary to all the traditions of English party government to break in any marked manner the continuity of foreign policy; and one part of the imperial idea, which consisted in the attempt to give more vigorous life to the Colonies by means of federation, appealed strongly to several members of the Cabinet. It was inevitable that on these two points the desires of the more fervid Liberals would encounter disappointment.

A still greater difficulty was to be found in Ireland, where, not unnaturally, considering the action of the Irish voters in the late election, the hope of legislation in accordance with the popular wishes ran high; yet, in the presence of the general feeling in England, it was impossible that

Prominence of Irish difficulties.

these hopes should be satisfied. In his letter to the Duke of Marlborough (March 9, 1880), Lord Beaconsfield had indicated the Irish question as the chief difficulty of the time. Yet the immediate prominence which it occupied in public affairs came somewhat as a surprise. The Queen's speech touched on three great branches of foreign and colonial policy, in India, Turkey, and South Africa; it promised what might be considered as a fair amount of domestic legislation. But with respect to Ireland, it confined itself to the simple though important declaration that the Peace Preservation Act, now approaching its end, would be allowed to lapse, as the Government intended to rely upon the resources of the ordinary law for the maintenance of peace and order. But signs of approaching storm were visible even in the debate on the Address. There was no lack of indication that all hope of postponing the Irish difficulty, and of devoting the session to the quiet fulfilment of much-needed domestic reforms, would prove futile. The Government was assailed on both sides. The Conservatives emphasised and deplored the deep responsibility the Government had undertaken in dispensing with special legislation, their chief weapon for the maintenance of order. The Irish members complained bitterly of the absence from the Ministerial programme of any curative measures, more especially of any reform of the Land Laws; while recognising the impossibility of complete or immediate legislation on this point, they demanded at least a temporary measure for delaying evictions until a more mature settlement could be arrived at.

Shortly after the close of the debate on the Address a Bill brought in by Mr. O'Connor Power to give effect to the wishes already expressed by the Irish members. It met with the sympathy of the Government. Mr. Forster consented to embody it in a measure which was already before the House. This measure, known as the Relief of Distress Bill, was rendered necessary by the extreme distress at that time prevalent in Ireland. It was intended to continue and enlarge an Act which had been passed in the last session, giving leave for the employment of a portion of the Irish Church surplus funds in loans to landlords for relief works. It was not wholly acceptable to the Irish members. They raised the cry constantly recurring whenever Bills of this sort were introduced, that the landlords alone would get any advantage. Their opposition was quieted by an additional grant of £200,000 towards outdoor relief; and the Bill, as it originally stood, was speedily carried. Not so the new clause embodying Mr. O'Connor Power's suggestion. So vehement was the opposition of the Conservatives, that it was found

necessary to remove the clause, and to introduce it as a separate measure under the title of Compensation for Disturbance Bill.

The object of this Bill was avowedly temporary, to relax till the end of 1881, the restrictions laid upon compensation by the existing law. The Land Act of 1870 had set a limit to the compensation which a tenant could claim upon eviction for non-payment of his rent; if he owed a full year's rent, no compensation at all was due to him. The Irish saw in this a very formidable power given to the landlords. It was true that "if the rent was exorbitant" the restriction was removed; but a rent might be high without being exorbitant, and if a landlord set a high rent, and refused to lower it in a bad season, he would be able to evict without paying compensation. The Compensation for Disturbance Bill enacted that an evicted tenant had a right to compensation if he could prove that his inability to pay his rent was not caused by his own thriftlessness, but by the agricultural depression in this and the two preceding years, and that he was willing to continue his tenancy on reasonable terms. Mr. Forster defended the Bill by the assertion that the sudden increase of evictions had made it absolutely necessary; already in only half the year they had reached the number of 1073, as against 500 in the five years preceding the year 1877. It encountered a furious opposition, headed by Mr. Chaplin, who made himself the champion of the rights of property; Lord Beaconsfield's prophecy that "the Land Act would create a new Irish grievance, *the payment of rent*," was, he declared, fulfilled. He found a vigorous following. Lord Randolph Churchill denounced the Bill as the first step in a social war; Mr. Plunkett saw in it a mere political proposal, a direct confiscation in fact of the property of one class in favour of another; while Mr. W. H. Smith asked whether the Government were prepared to extend the principle to tradesmen who could not pay their rent in bad times. A striking instance of the impossibility of applying the principles of one system of land-owning to another had arisen. The Land Act of 1870 had treated the tenants as partners with the landlord, but had reserved the actual property to the landlord. If the relation of landlord and tenant was regarded in any sense as a partnership, both partners should suffer; this was the Irish view. If the landlord was the owner of the land, he should be able to let it under contract, and on failure of the contract he should resume possession; this was the landlord's view. The Liberal party, as represented by the Government, did not allow the necessity of this alternative; they still aimed at producing a compromise which should save the rights of property

Compensation
for Disturb-
ance Bill.

as understood in England. Mr. Gladstone even went so far as to say that the Bill was rather for the protection than for the destruction of the rights of property, because it enabled the Government with a clear conscience to use all the means in its power to support them. The Bill, he averred, touched only one peculiar incident of property, eviction, which had been but lately introduced into Ireland, and which, he declared (suddenly assuming the other side of the compromise), had been established fraudulently behind the back and against the rights of the occupier. Both the Premier and Lord Hartington were careful to point out that the passing of the Bill ought not to lead to a general movement against the payment of rent, because all the old means of enforcing such payments were left in the landlord's hands. The debates were long and heated, but finally, after thirteen days, on the 26th of July, the Bill was carried. A week later the House of Lords contemptuously threw it out by a majority of more than two hundred.

It is a matter of profound regret that no question of Irish policy can be discussed with reasonable and intelligent calmness. The lines of party have been marked with so much exaggeration, religion and passion have played so large a part in Irish history, years of mis-rule have created so thick a cloud of prejudice between the two countries, that difference of opinion invariably leads to exaggerated passion, which finds its expression in riot and disturbance. The persevering immobility which has constantly marked the dealings of the English Parliament, and the sudden collapse of opposition to reforms which has again and again attended the outbreak of disaffection, had unfortunately taught the Irish the double lesson that violent pressure would prove successful, and that nothing short of violent pressure would avail. The rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was followed, as might have been expected, by a renewed crop of outrages; and the well-meant determination of the Government to maintain order only by the firm administration of the existing laws began to assume the appearance of an act of culpable weakness and folly. On the 25th of September, only a few days after the conclusion of the long session, Lord Mountmorres was murdered near his own house, with circumstances of extreme inhumanity. This outrage was followed in many parts of Ireland by all the worst signs of agrarian disturbance. The agents of the law were roughly handled in the execution of their duties, and shots were again and again fired into their windows. Bands of masked men burst into the houses of bailiffs and caretakers. Evicted tenants were replaced

**Consequences
of the rejection
of the Dis-
turbance Bill.**

upon the land by force; and if no personal violence was done to those who had paid their rent, their cattle were frequently houghed or mutilated; while hundreds of threatening letters were received by landlords and land agents. Only a fortnight after the murder of Lord Mountmorres a similar outrage was attempted near Bantry Bay; the landlord, indeed, escaped, but the driver of his car was shot.

There was a very general belief that these outrages were fomented by the Land League, although the leaders persistently repudiated the charge. However this may be, they certainly seized with avidity upon a new form of coercion as cruel as it was effective. Mr. Parnell, in one of his addresses, had thrown out a hint that farmers who refused to join or to obey the League should be shunned as lepers. The suggestion quickly bore fruit. In October a letter appeared in the newspapers from a land agent in Mayo, named Captain Boycott, narrating his experiences. All intercourse with him and his family had been absolutely stopped, no servant would remain with them, no shopkeeper would sell to them, no labourer would work on his farm. A volunteer expedition from the Orange counties, protected by 7000 troops, was required to harvest his crops and to bring him and his family to a place of safety. The newly devised system of persecution, which received its name from its first victim, was openly adopted as their chief weapon by the Land League. Conviction of any action regarded as an offence by the League was followed by a sentence of "Boycotting," which meant to its victim something little short of financial ruin. A reign of terror was established, which threatened to make the law of the Land League the paramount law of the country. The system was the more effectual because there was much doubt whether it could be regarded as an infringement of any actual law.

The crisis appeared so acute that it was generally supposed that an autumn session would be held and extraordinary powers demanded by the Government. No such course was followed. Additional troops were sent to the disturbed districts, but the Government were satisfied with attempting to strike a blow which could scarcely fail to be futile. After much consultation, the law officers declared their belief that the leaders of the Land League had gone beyond the law and had laid themselves open to legal proceedings. Their arrest was at once carried out (October 1880), but, as might have been expected, no satisfactory result followed their trial. It was with the greatest difficulty that jurors or witnesses could be found willing to risk the dangers attending

Arrest and
acquittal of
the Land
Leaguers.

the displeasure of the Land League. A verdict of acquittal was a foregone conclusion.

The opportunity was not neglected by the Opposition. Few things are more disastrous than the failure of a Government prosecution. The apparent weakness and supineness of the Liberal Ministry was an easy topic of invective. Yet Mr. Gladstone, in his speech at the Lord Mayor's dinner, had plainly stated that if it became necessary he would not shrink from having recourse to special coercive legislation. When Parliament met in January 1881 it was evident that the necessity for coercion. necessity had in fact arisen. The Government had found themselves unable to secure the rights and liberties of those who were opposed to the Land League. They were forced to acknowledge their inability; but they had no intention of entering upon the hopeless task of attempting to restore order by means of coercion alone. They felt it to be their duty to attack the causes for the discontent, of which the prevailing disorder was but the symptom. A Coercion Bill and a reform of the Land Law were both necessary. The only question to be decided was the order of precedence of the two measures. No man was more full of humane instincts than Mr. Forster; but his visits to Ireland had impressed upon him a very dark view of its condition, and he felt himself incapable of coping with the disorder, unless armed with some form of coercion. No man was more ready than Mr. Gladstone to sympathise with the Irish and to redress their grievances; but he had lived all his life amid the dignified traditions of English administration, and disorder was abhorrent to him. Under the influence of these two statesmen, the Cabinet decided that the disorder must be repressed before curative measures could be introduced.

A lengthened debate upon the Address postponed any immediate action. The Queen's speech had in a few strong words described the terrible condition of Ireland, and the necessity for additional powers to suppress disorder. It also recommended the further development of the principles of the Land Act of 1870, and the establishment of some form of county government founded on representative principles.

The debate on the Address gave occasion for the display of bitter Irish obstruction. opposition from the Irish party. Obstruction had already made its appearance in the preceding Parliament, and the length to which the debate was extended by amendments from the Irish members was generally stigmatised as a fresh exhibition of the same objectionable tactics. But it must be remembered that the speech from the throne contained a distinct indication that a

strong measure of coercion would be introduced, and it was not without truth that the Irish members urged that their constitutional rights were gravely threatened, and that since the state of parties precluded any effective resistance to the Ministry, it was only by persistence that they could influence public opinion in their favour. The line taken by them throughout the debate was the assertion of the innocence of the Land League in respect to outrage, the spontaneous and universal character of the discontent which directly resulted from the rejection of the Compensation Bill, and, as a deduction from these facts, the wisdom nay necessity of remedial measures before coercion was attempted; for it was possible that coercion would not be necessary, and it was certain, if applied, to render still more difficult the establishment of order.

The most striking incident of the debate was the assumption on the part of Mr. Parnell of the position of a rival leader offering terms to Government. In supporting an amendment of Mr. Justin McCarthy, to the effect "that the Crown should refrain for the present from the use of its naval, military, or constabulary forces in carrying out evictions," Mr. Parnell took the opportunity of giving a clear exposition of his views. He regarded it as necessary that the relation of landlord and tenant should disappear in Ireland; there would then cease to be any class supported by English influence, and the united people might without friction or violence obtain legislative independence. He went so far as to say that, if a fair chance of success presented itself, it was the duty of every Irishman to shed his blood for his country, and concluded by asserting that if the Government began by coercion they would have no opportunity of settling the land law, for the first arrest would be followed by a determined opposition to the payment of rent. Such language was not calculated to soften the antagonism which had now assumed a national form and affected both parties in the House, with the exception of a few of the most advanced reformers.

Immediately after the passing of the Address, Mr. Forster moved for leave to introduce his Coercion Bills, known as the "Protection of Property" and the "Arms Bill." It was the signal for a tremendous struggle, which dealt a severe blow to the dignity of Parliament and necessitated very important modifications in the procedure of the House. Whether the Irish members had been justified in the prolongation of the debate on the Address or not, they had by this time matured a system of opposition based upon the strained employment of the usages of Parliament which could

Mr. Parnell's
proposals.

Stormy scenes
in the House.

hardly fail to throw discredit upon the House. By speeches of inordinate length, resumed relentlessly again and again after the Chair had pointed out that the wide disquisitions were out of order, and by repeated motions for adjournment necessitating wearisome divisions, they succeeded in wasting the time of the House during a continued sitting of twenty-two hours. It was not till two o'clock on Wednesday, January 26th, that the sitting begun on Tuesday evening was brought to a conclusion. This was but an opening exhibition of the tactics of obstruction. On the 31st of January Mr. Gladstone, on being asked whether it was proposed to have another all-night sitting, replied that the vote on the introduction of the Bill must be taken at all events in that sitting. The challenge was taken up by Mr. Parnell. In a speech which was not without cogency, he declared that a prolonged sitting would not conduce to the dignity of the House, and that the Government would be no further advanced with their measure even if they sat for three nights than if they consented to an immediate adjournment on the understanding that a compromise should be effected and the debate concluded on the following day. But the English members had by this time lost their temper, and were by no means inclined to yield to the wishes of a small minority. Thus for forty-one dreary hours the debate dragged on, the House being kept up by relays, and the Chair taken sometimes by the Speaker, sometimes by other members.

It is difficult to understand the reason for the unyielding obstinacy of the majority. The powers of the Speaker had already been increased for the purpose of thwarting obstruction, and it is probable that there was a difference of opinion between the Conservatives, who desired to put in force the rules they had themselves made, and the Liberals, who desired a different method. By the new rules the Speaker had the right of "naming," and by a vote of the House "suspending" individual members. But he declined to make use of this power. In vain did Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Smith attempt to throw upon the Government the duty of setting the Chair in motion. Mr. Bright replied that the responsibility lay with the House, and not with the Government, and at the same time he indicated that the Prime Minister intended to make certain propositions which the House might discuss. At last, at nine o'clock on Wednesday morning, February 2d, the Speaker, returning to the Chair, took the matter into his own hands, and carried out a sort of *coup d'état*. Refusing to hear Mr. Biggar, who was addressing the House, he explained the necessity of his action in a few strong words, and at

once put the question of the amendment which was being debated. The amendment was thrown out by a majority of 145. He then put the main question, that leave be given to bring in the Bill, and refused to hear any further remarks on it. The Home Rulers rose, and with shouts of "Privilege" left the House. Mr. Forster at once brought up the Bill, and when the Speaker asked when the second reading would be taken, Mr. Gladstone answered decisively, "At twelve o'clock to-day." The House then adjourned for three hours' rest.

The form of the Coercion Bill, which had been a well-kept secret till the opening of Parliament, had leaked out during these scenes of disorder. It was somewhat unprecedented in its character. As explained by Mr. Forster on the 4th of February, the disorder in Ireland and the difficulty found in the administration of justice depended chiefly upon the existence of a limited number of men, without whose active participation the speeches of the Land Leaguers would have been futile enough. It was the removal of these men, whom the police knew well, and whom he stigmatised under the name of "village tyrants," at which Mr. Forster aimed. By his Bill the Lord Lieutenant was to have the power of issuing warrants for the arrest of any one whom he suspected to be guilty of treasonable or agrarian offences. The prisoner was to be treated as unconvicted, but might be detained without trial till the last day of 1882. There was no definition of the offences, and the power of arrest depended solely upon that most dangerous and elastic ground, suspicion. The Bill thus obviously placed an extraordinary power in the hands of Government. It was brought in under very peculiar circumstances.

Mr. Forster's
Coercion Bills.

The forty-one hours' sitting and its authoritative closure by the Speaker rendered some definite measure necessary for the furtherance of public business. And even before the adjournment on that memorable Wednesday Mr. Gladstone gave notice of a resolution, by which a motion might be made declaring the state of public business urgent; if supported by forty members, the Speaker was to put the question at once without debate; if a majority of not less than three to one supported the motion, business became "urgent" and the whole regulation of business passed into the hands of the Speaker. It was plain that this was a drastic method of destroying what had hitherto been regarded as the rights of the minority. It is true that the proportion of assents required before urgency could be declared was large enough to secure the measure from abuse under ordinary circumstances; but when there existed, as

Gladstone's
resolution for
suspending
members.

at the present moment, a combination of the two great parties, it seemed as though the voice of the small minority of Irishmen would be entirely quenched. It is not surprising that their opposition produced a new scene of wild disorder.

On the 3d of February the scene began. Mr. Gladstone, on attempting to bring forward his resolution, was interrupted by Mr. Dillon, whose opposition was only put aside by his forcible removal from the House by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Parnell was the next victim. He insisted upon his right to move that "Mr. Gladstone should be no longer heard." He was named, suspended, and removed with a show of force. Again Mr. Gladstone attempted to speak, but was interrupted by Mr. Finnigan, who also was removed. During the divisions following the motions for the removal of these members the Irish had refused to vote. For thus disregarding the authority of the Chair the Speaker named them all. Their removal was voted *en masse*, and each, after saying a few words, left the House when touched by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Thirty-six members in all were suspended.

The incident gave occasion to a fine piece of eloquence on the part of Mr. Gladstone. After explaining the real value and meaning of liberty of speech, he concluded in the following words: "Character and honour are the essence of the House of Commons. As you value the duties which have been committed to you, as you value the traditions that you have received, as you estimate highly the interests of this vast empire, I call upon you without hesitation, after the challenges that have been addressed to you, after what you have suffered, to rally to the performance of a great public duty, and to determine that you will continue to be, as you have been, the mainstay and public glory of your country, and that you will not degenerate into the laughing-stock of the world."

Mr. Gladstone's resolution was carried practically without alteration. The Speaker produced a set of stringent rules for the management of the debate, and it was under these rules that the Coercion Bill was declared urgent and brought in. Strong though the new rules were, they did not prove sufficient. A discussion of four days in Committee had only settled a single sub-section of a single clause. The Speaker therefore felt it his duty to produce a still more stringent rule for putting an end to dilatory discussions in Committee. It was only by taking advantage of this new rule that the Bill got through the Committee stage by the 23d of February. No less than nineteen amendments

**Coercion Bills
passed, March
2 and 21, 1881.**

were still undiscussed, and were put silently to the vote in accordance with the new regulations. On the twenty-fourth day of the debate "The Protection of Property Bill" was passed. "The Arms Bill" after a similar troublous course was passed and became law (March 21).

•The first step in their Irish programme being thus completed, the Government were able to produce the remedial measures which were to justify coercion. On the 7th of April Mr. Gladstone explained his Bill for the improvement of the Irish Land Law.

In the unceasing discussions which had arisen respecting the necessary reforms of the Land Laws there had been, as Mr. Parnell had pointed out, varieties of opinion among the reformers, which covered the wide interval

Land Bill
introduced,
April 1881.

lying between what was known as the "three F's" and the resumption of the land by the occupiers. Fixity of tenure, free sale, and fair rents were the programme of the one party. This formula recognised a dual ownership, but limited the right of the owner to a fixed and perpetual rent-charge on the land. The other party arguing that years of over-renting had long since fully satisfied any claim of ownership, demanded as a matter of justice the restitution of the land to the occupier; in other words, confiscation pure and simple. Seen from the ordinary English point of view, both extremes seemed to encroach largely upon the rights of property; and even the less stringent reform was an obvious assault on the principle of free contract, which is the basis of the English law. But Mr. Gladstone, and those who thought with him, believed that the doctrines of political economy were modified by the circumstances of those to whom they were applied. He recognised the fact that the Irish had never fully accepted the strict doctrine of property in land, and that the legislation of 1870 had considerably increased the value of the occupier's interest, which to the Irish mind was as completely his property as the landlord's interest was the property of the landlord. Such general confiscation as was implied in the exaggerated view of the extreme Land Leaguers was obviously out of the question. But the Government, maintaining the idea of a quasi-partnership, attempted in the Bill which was now produced to establish a permanent settlement of the rights of the two partners. To turn into written law an ill-defined though strongly felt usage requires the most careful and elaborate consideration of difficulties which might arise under a great variety of circumstances; the Bill was of necessity loaded with a mass of details. The mastery of these details shown by Mr. Gladstone, and the untiring ability and patience with which he explained or modified them, excited the

admiration even of his bitterest opponents. But the character of the Bill rendered it open to assault on all sides, and afforded an infinite number of points on which discussion might arise. In its main provisions it legalised free sale, and if not fixity, yet continuity of tenure, and something which might be spoken of as fair rent. It was this last point which offered the greatest difficulty.

If "fair rent" was not that which was arrived at by ordinary competition in the market, it was necessary either to define it (which was practically impossible) or to establish some authoritative machinery by which, if not a *fair*, at least a *judicial* rent could be settled in each case as it arose. A Royal Commission, which had lately been sitting, known as the Bessborough Commission, had reported in favour of the establishment of a Land Court; and it was the creation of such a Court which was the chief basis of Mr. Gladstone's present measure. Access to this Court was optional, open to tenants or to landlord and tenant acting in common, not to a landlord alone. Rents, when once judicially fixed, were to be unchangeable for fifteen years. Evictions during that time, except for breach of covenant or non-payment of rent, were to be rendered impossible.

The second part of the Bill was occupied with two proposals of a somewhat different character, for the purpose of alleviating the difficulties of the present crisis. The first of these proposals was "assisted emigration." The Land Commissioners were to be allowed to promote emigration by advancing money to the agents of any British colony or dependency, for the purpose of assisting poorer emigrants. The second proposal was the establishment, on a somewhat small scale, of peasant proprietorship. In order to afford assistance to occupiers and enable them to obtain possession of their holdings, the Commissioners were to be allowed to advance, on satisfactory security, as much as three-fourths of the sum required for purchase; or even directly to purchase estates for the purpose of reselling to the tenants their respective holdings, if fully satisfied both of the expediency of the step and that a sufficient number of the tenants on the estate demanded it.

Such a Bill was clearly open to a great variety of attacks. The landowners saw in it a method of lowering their rents, which they stigmatised as confiscation. "It is a Bill," said the Duke of Argyll, "by which three persons are authorised to settle the value of the whole country." To the political economist it seemed a violent assault upon one of the first principles of his science, the settlement of values by the relation of supply and demand. To the

Objections to the Land Bill.

lawyer its details afforded problems to which no logical answer could be found, and there lay at the root of it a confusion of two principles, ownership and partnership. To the more sensible Irish reformers it appeared doubtful whether a Bill of such complexity, and falling so far short of the extreme wishes of the people, would really afford any permanent settlement of the questions at issue between landlord and tenant. To the extreme Nationalists, trained of late years by the language of their parliamentary leaders to desire the entire destruction of landlordism, not only did the means afforded for the establishment of a peasant proprietorship seem inadequate, but the mere fact that landlordism was re-established by it under fresh safeguards rendered the Bill highly objectionable. Nor were the emigration clauses to their mind; for it was an article of the Nationalist creed that the population of Ireland was not too great for the resources of the country if properly developed; the redistribution of the people, and not their removal, was the object they desired.

The Bill, thus open to reasonable question and not satisfactory to the Irish themselves, seemed to the bulk of the Conservative party an uncalled-for interference with the existing Land Law. They believed that simpler measures securing social and material improvements, with some slight increase of peasant proprietorships, were the proper means of meeting the requirements of the country.

On the other side, the majority of the House accepted the position of Mr. Gladstone. To him the situation was political rather than economical, and the questions were to be treated in that large spirit of statesmanship which accepts compromise and acknowledges anomaly, which overrides even real class interests in the pursuit of great and beneficent public objects. The necessity for the measure, he declared, was to be found in the scarcity of land wherewith to satisfy the "land hunger" which formed so strong but so abnormal an element of the character of the Irish peasant. The chief principles of the Bill were the honest acceptance of Irish ideas and customs; its main point was the establishment of a Court which should moderate and legalise those customs. This was entirely in accordance with his previous handling of the Irish question, and he was able to adduce in support of such a Court the opinion expressed by Lord Beaconsfield himself and the recommendation of two Royal Commissions.

Gladstone's
reasons for the
Land Bill.

In accordance with these various views, the various sections of the Opposition expressed their dissent from the Bill. While Mr. Gibson demanded compensation for what was nothing short of a great act

of attainder against the landlords, the Conservative party as a whole produced an amendment declaring that the House was disposed to promote the social and material improvement of Ireland "by measures for the development of its industrial resources, rather than by a measure which confuses, without settling upon a permanent basis, the relations between landlord and tenant." Lord Elcho bitterly denounced what he considered the economic heresies of the Bill; and Mr. Parnell, stigmatising it as "a miserable half remedy," refused to support it. The second reading, however, in spite of the abstention of the Irish party, was carried by 352 to 176. In fact, in presence of the disturbed condition of Ireland, most men considered the passing of some Bill of this sort as a matter of urgent necessity. It was in Committee that the real onslaught began. Night after night the details of every clause were subjected to the most minute and hostile criticism. The discussion which began on the 26th of May was not concluded till the 30th of July, on which day the third reading was taken.

During these two months of struggle many alterations and additions had been made in the Bill; but the constant skill and attention with which Mr. Gladstone encountered his adversaries enabled him to bring it out of Committee without much loss so far as its original principles were concerned. The attacks came from both sides, and to both parties in the quarrel concessions had to be made. With a natural wish to limit the action of the Bill as far as possible, the landlords, with Mr. Heneage as their spokesman, urged an amendment which excepted from its action those estates which were conducted on what was spoken of as the English system. Much of the necessity for the Bill depended on the prevalent custom which left the improvements to the tenant; but there were a considerable number of estates in which, as in England, the improvements were the work, and therefore logically the property, of the landlord. The reasonableness of the demand to exclude such estates from the new law was so strongly felt that Mr. Heneage's amendment was rejected in a full House by a majority of only 25. On some other points the Government found it necessary to yield. The most important of the concessions they made to the landlord was his freedom of access to the Land Court. By the Bill, as introduced, the Court seemed to have been regarded as an instrument for saving the tenant from exorbitant rentals; it was taken for granted that there could be no error in the other direction. The landlords now succeeded in obtaining the recognition of such a possibility, and the right to appeal

to the Court for remedy. Two important clauses which were added to the Bill were, on the other hand, concessions to the tenant. One of the burning questions of the time was the payment of arrears: so long as this weight of debt hung upon the tenant, the Nationalists declared that no just settlement was possible; contracted, as they urged, under exorbitant rents and in times of distress, justice demanded that means should be found for setting the tenant free from it. A clause was therefore added, by which the Government was to advance to the landlord half the arrears due for the bad seasons of 1878 and 1879. With this, which was more than he could by ordinary means hope to recover from his tenants, he was to be satisfied. The tenants were to repay the sum advanced by half-yearly instalments spread over fifteen years, and at the end of this time a full release of all arrears was to be given them. The second additional clause was intended to meet the widely spread belief that many leases had been obtained unfairly since 1870. The action of the Court was now made retrospective; power was given it to examine such leases, and to quash them if they proved to be unjust. The names of the three men to whom the large powers of the Land Court were to be entrusted were set out in the Bill; they were Mr. Justice O'Hagan, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Vernon. With these important alterations and some others of a less serious character, the third reading of the Bill was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 220 against 14. Mr. Parnell and a few of his friends, unwilling to reject entirely what was meant for a conciliatory measure, yet regarding it as thoroughly inadequate, abstained from voting.

But success in the Lower House was but half the battle; it was in the Upper House, consisting practically of landlords, that the Bill was likely to be defeated. But even there the recognition of the necessity of some such measure was so strong that Lord Salisbury, the leader of the Opposition, while heaping unmitigated censure upon the Bill, advised his followers not to reject it, but to use their ingenuity in changing it during Committee. His advice was taken, and the Bill was read a second time without division. In Committee the wrecking process began. On several very important points the decisions of the House of Commons were reversed. The method of calculating the "fair rent," the classes to whom the provisions of the Bill were to apply, the extent in the matter of time of the jurisdiction of the Court, and the difficult question of arrears, were all subjected to hostile amendments. Lord Salisbury succeeded in introducing a proviso that the Land Court, when engaged in settling

*The Land Bill
passes the Com-
mons, July 30,
1881.*

*Land Bill in
the Lords.*

a "fair rent," should leave out of the calculation any sum paid by the tenant for the "tenant right." In marking out the classes to which the Bill applied, the Commons had settled that the leaseholders should at the close of their leases enjoy the advantage secured by the Bill "to present tenants," and be allowed to bring their case before the Land Court. This extension of privilege did not meet with favour in the House of Lords; an amendment was passed removing it. The revision of leases since 1870, and the right to break any lease obtained under undue influence had, as has been already said, been given to the Land Court. Lord Cairns found little difficulty in persuading the House to remove this retrospective action. With regard to arrears, Mr. Parnell had succeeded in carrying an amendment which allowed the Court, when a tenant applied for the fixing of his judicial rent, to stay all proceedings for recovery of arrears while the case was before them. The rejection of this amendment by the House of Lords was a very direct refusal to listen to the strongly expressed desires of the Irish Nationalists. Even the purchase clauses were not left untouched. The requirement of the Bill that the consent of three-fourths of the tenants must be obtained before an estate was purchased by the Court for resale seemed to the Lords an unnecessary restriction, and was removed.

When the Bill came back to the House of Commons it was evident that it had been considerably changed. The Government determined to adhere closely to the great principles of their measure, while adopting all such amendments as appeared to be merely verbal or technical. They went so far as to accept with some modifications Mr. Heneage's rejected amendment which the Lords had restored; free sale was to be prohibited where it could be proved that the improvements on the property had been not only made, but maintained at the landlord's expense. They agreed also to make some alterations in Mr. Parnell's amendment, though they insisted on reinserting it; the limit of time during which proceedings for arrears might be delayed was changed from six months to three. Though certain small alterations were thus allowed, the amendments of the Lords were not generally accepted; and the Bill was sent back to the Upper House very much in its original form. A bitter dispute between the Houses seemed imminent, which threatened something closely approaching a deadlock. The Lords, or rather the majority of the Lords, found themselves in a dilemma. They had taken upon themselves the functions of the Opposition, and as a matter of party tactics were very unwilling to

Dispute between the two Houses on the Land Bill.

throw out the Bill, and so to hasten a Ministerial crisis. Little more than a year had elapsed since at the last general election the Liberals had been triumphantly restored to power, on the distinct understanding that a Bill to reform the Irish Land Law was to be introduced. After so short an interval the Opposition had no wish to risk renewed defeat, nor were they prepared to supply a new Ministry, even if defeat were avoided. On the other hand, the Lords could scarcely with a good grace surrender amendments which they had declared to be of vital importance. The position of the Government was almost as difficult as that of the Opposition. They might indeed withdraw the Bill, reintroduce it in some slightly altered form in the next session, and fight the question all over again; but, meanwhile, Ireland was waiting for its remedial measure. Or they might take the opportunity to dissolve and force on a new election; but, with a large majority behind them, and supported by a national verdict hardly a year old, it seemed undesirable again to appeal to the country.

However, as neither party wished to drive matters to extremity, Mr. Gladstone found it possible to adopt a third and more statesmanlike course. He determined to yield A compromise effected. wherever it was possible to do so without seriously injuring the Bill, and thus to give the Lords an opportunity of withdrawing with dignity from their false position. The concessions which he thought it prudent to make were no doubt important. Leaseholders, for instance, if their leases terminated after 1941, were excluded from the action of the Bill; Mr. Parnell's clause was entirely omitted; and certain rights of appeal from the judgment of the Land Court were allowed. The concessions were, at all events, sufficient to enable Lord Salisbury, while still declaring his belief in the injustice of the Bill, to assert that the two most important points he had in view, the equality of access to the Court by landlord and tenant, and the exclusion of the price paid for tenant-right in fixing a "fair rent," had both been obtained. The Lords withdrew their opposition, and the Bill passed (August 22, 1881).

The Government had chosen Ireland, or more correctly had been forced to adopt Ireland, as the field of parliamentary battle. The circumstances which had produced this result had also strained to the extreme the administrative capacity of the Cabinet. During the whole of the spring of the year 1881, while the Coercion Bill was forcing its way slowly through Parliament, the ferment in Ireland had been increasing. Increasing ferment in Ireland. The trial

of the Land Leaguers, who had been arrested in October, had ended in their acquittal, and the country continued to be agitated by frequent meetings and fiery speeches. It was in vain that Mr. Michael Davitt, perhaps the most dangerous of the national orators, was silenced. In his case there was no need to fear the acquittal of a jury; for the term of his punishment for conduct during the Fenian troubles had not yet expired, and the language he was now using was held to be inconsistent with his position as a prisoner liberated on ticket-of-leave; he was therefore apprehended and detained without further trial. The arrest produced no good result; there was but one martyr more to feed with his injuries the enthusiasm of the Leaguers. Neither sex nor profession held aloof from the Nationalist zeal. The women of Ireland, under the presidency of Miss Parnell, formed themselves into a Ladies' Land League. The Church found a leader in Archbishop Croke of Cashel, and threw itself energetically into the movement in spite of the disapproval of the Archbishop of Dublin.

The attempted suppression of meetings and the forcible support of evictions had on more than one occasion caused bloodshed. But after the Coercion Bill was passed, and when the Government entered upon the struggle armed with the new powers which had been entrusted to them, it was supposed that no difficulty would have been found in restoring order. Unfortunately Mr. Forster was fully persuaded that outrages would at once cease upon the apprehension of a few turbulent, but inconspicuous agitators; and those who were first arrested as "suspects" under the new law were men of quite second-rate position. The power of the League had in fact increased so rapidly, that the assertion that "The Land League was the real Government of Ireland" seemed scarcely an exaggeration. For the moment, the voice of the illegitimate authority appeared to carry more weight than that of its legitimate rival. The Land League Convention, held in Dublin in September 1881, marked the climax of its power. The farmers and the priests were there fully represented, and, after declaring their belief that the Land Act had been procured entirely by the action of the League, they placed themselves unreservedly in the hands of Mr. Parnell. He delivered his verdict upon the Act in the tone of a man who was master of the situation. He bade them accept it as a mere instalment, and not as the completion of their work. Their present duty was to watch it and to try it with test cases before they consented to a general adoption of its advantages. There was no disorder in the Convention, its conduct was self-

**Power of the
Land League.**

**Convention in
Dublin, Sept.
1881.**

restrained and constitutional. The attitude it adopted towards the Government was that of a rival power, which might or might not be satisfied with the concessions made to it.

Such an attitude of self-assertion, though orderly in itself, was certainly not calculated to check the extreme disorder with which the country was still full. The leaders of the League had always declared that they were not responsible for those outrages. Their assertion was probably so far true, that they did not directly contrive them; but that they allowed them and used them for their own purposes seems certain. Such at all events was the opinion of the Government. In

**Arrest of the
leaders and
suppression of
the Land
League.**

October, speeches of bitter recrimination were exchanged between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell. It was intolerable to Mr. Gladstone that his great effort at reconciliation should be so coldly received, and he met with such constant recurrence of disorder. He had believed that the removal of a few irreconcilable and criminal agitators would have allowed the whole people to recognise the excellence of the Land Act, and that its smooth and beneficent working would have produced peace. He could not put up with the half-hearted and critical approval of Mr. Parnell, which seemed to be preventing the fair trial of the new system. Only a few days after Mr. Parnell's reply to the indignant speech of the Prime Minister, the step was taken which neither Mr. Gladstone nor Mr. Forster had at first regarded as necessary. The leaders of the Land League were suddenly apprehended in Dublin, and placed in Kilmainham Prison (October 13, 1881). This active assault immediately produced active resistance; the Land League played its last card. An address, signed by the imprisoned Leaguers, called upon the tenants to refuse to pay any rent until their leaders were liberated. The Government met the address by a declaration of the illegality of the Land League and the suppression of all its branches; and it seemed as if this long-delayed blow was all that was necessary; the new Land Act came at once into working; the Land Court was crowded. The victory of the legitimate combatant in the struggle seemed secured.

But the policy of the Government had in reality met with no success. Agrarian outrages of the old-fashioned character, with the miserable incidents of mutilation of cattle, midnight visitation of farmhouses, rick-burning, and personal violence, all included under the general name of "moonlighting," had created a reign of terror in the western districts. Bailiffs had been murdered in Connemara; a lady had been shot as she sat by the

**Reign of
terror.**

side of her brother, an unpopular landlord. Fenian assassinations had occurred in Dublin itself. The arrest of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, far from allaying the storm, only rendered it more severe by withdrawing any modifying influence which the open association of the Land League might have exercised over the more irreconcilable secret societies.

The opening of the year 1882 saw no amelioration of the crisis. In England party spirit ran high. While the Conservative orators of the Opposition found no words strong enough to stigmatise the weakness of the executive and the "policy of public plunder," the Irish party were loud in their attacks upon all forms of coercion, and threatened a perpetuation of the present disorders unless evictions and arrears were handled in a very conciliatory spirit.

Mr. Gladstone's policy was based upon the idea that his great land reform would have been allowed fair play and would prove a complete source of reconciliation, but that in the meanwhile the re-establishment of order was a matter of prime necessity. But both conciliation and coercion appeared equally ineffective.

The solution of the difficulty was not made easier when, while the address at the opening of Parliament was still under discussion, the House of Lords, acting on the advice of Lord Salisbury, thought fit to appoint a committee with a large majority of landlords to inquire into the working of the Land Act. A severer blow could scarcely have been dealt at the Prime Minister; it was impossible that he should bear it in silence. He moved and carried a resolution implying grave censure upon the action of the Lords. The two Houses seemed now to stand in direct antagonism the one to the other. Of course, the resolution was a roll of idle thunder; yet it marks a real crisis in the constitutional development of the country. Taken in connection with the action of the Lords in throwing out the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, the appointment of a committee of inquiry marks the first determined step in a policy consistently pursued by the Conservative leader. From the time of the Reform Bill of 1832, with scarcely a check, the power of the Commons had been upon the increase. History presents during that period an unbroken advance of the Democracy. It had found its voice in the House of Commons. There was every appearance of its continuing its triumphant course. But Lord Salisbury had recognised that, from a constitutional point of view, this progress was one-sided; there lay ready to hand a power sufficiently strong to check, if not to stop, the

Salisbury proposes committee of inquiry.

Renewed influence of the House of Lords.

advancing flood, to change and modify its course, though its impulse could not be wholly resisted. The constitutional power of the House of Lords, unbroken and unquestioned, though practically much in abeyance, was on certain questions especially connected with property always at his command. The reassertion by the Lords, under Lord Salisbury's guidance, of their position in the constitution becomes henceforward a marked characteristic of political life.

In the Lower House the opinion was gradually forcing itself upon the minds of all that if Mr. Gladstone's policy was to be successful, a move forward must be made on both its lines. There would be no difficulty in increasing coercion, on that point the Conservatives would certainly vote with the Ministry. It was less certain how any further step in conciliation could be carried. Yet on this point the mind of the Prime Minister was decided. He had already spoken in terms of approval of a Bill produced by Mr. Redmond, as embodying the wishes of the Irish so far as its clauses on arrears went. He had already during the debate on the Address gone even further, and confessed that he would hail with pleasure any legislation which tended to lessen the concentration of business in the hands of the Imperial Parliament, and had expressed his willingness to consider favourably any scheme of Irish self-government which left the authority of the Imperial Parliament uninjured. It would appear that he was already dreaming of Home Rule.

The first step in the direction of conciliation however encountered opposition within the Cabinet itself. The unexpected **Forster's** release of the three members of Parliament imprisoned **resignation.** at Kilmainham as leaders of the Land League was immediately followed by the resignation of Mr. Forster. A few days later Michael Davitt was also released, and it began to be whispered that some sort of compromise had been entered into with the Irish leaders, though Mr. Gladstone emphatically declared that the Government was acting on its own initiative. Mr. Forster, when explaining his resignation, laid much stress on his constant advice that no bargain should ever be made with the Land Leaguers; only after the new powers demanded by Government had been granted and had been proved successful, did he think that the experiment of releasing the prisoners might have been tried. His speech was certainly open to the interpretation that there had been some sort of bargain, and though this was again strenuously denied, it appeared that information had reached the Government which led them to hope that if the arrears were treated in the spirit of Mr. Redmond's late Bill, Mr. Parnell and his friends

would find it possible to support the cause of order. The details of this information were subsequently brought to light during the discussion on the Arrears Bill.

It appeared that in the beginning of April Mr. O'Shea, the member for Clare, had been struck with the importance of the question of the arrears. He had an interview with Mr. Parnell, who had been temporarily released for private reasons from Kilmainham. Mr. Parnell had honourably kept his parole, and refused to mix in any political action. He however urged Mr. O'Shea to get the arrears settled on the principle subsequently incorporated in the Bills both of Mr. Redmond and of the Government. Alluding to a motion of Mr. W. H. Smith, which was afterwards withdrawn, he pointed out that the Tories had already accepted his view with respect to peasant proprietors. He believed that the "moonlighting" was the work of small farmers threatened with eviction for arrears. Mr. O'Shea wrote both to the Prime Minister and to Mr. Chamberlain on the 13th of April. From both he received a certain amount of encouragement, though no sign of any intention to make a bargain. A few days later he had an interview with Mr. Forster, and also with the prisoners in Kilmainham. He declared that in neither case, though he had successfully urged the necessity of the withdrawal of the "no rent manifesto," had any bargain for liberty been suggested. He had also received a letter from Mr. Parnell, and had shown it to Mr. Forster. The letter was a strong plea for the settlement of the arrears question, and the expression of the writer's belief that "if that question were settled upon the lines indicated, he and his colleagues were confident that the exertions they would be able to make strenuously and unremittingly would be effective in stopping outrage and intimidations of all kinds." The letter closed with the words, "The accomplishment of the programme I have sketched out to you would, in my judgment, be regarded by the country as a practical settlement of the land question, and would, I feel sure, enable us to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles and measures of general reform, and that the Government at the end of this session would, from the state of the country, feel themselves thoroughly justified in dispensing with further coercive measures." This letter was not satisfactory to Mr. Forster. It became even less so after the further explanations of Mr. O'Shea. According to Mr. O'Shea, it meant that "the conspiracy, which has been used to get up boycotting and outrages, will now be used to put them down," and that Mr. Parnell hoped to make use of a certain

person (probably Mr. Sheridan, a released suspect), who "under various disguises was coming backwards and forwards from Mr. Egan to the outrage mongers of the West." Much, of course, depended upon the use of the word "conspiracy." To Mr. Forster and to Mr. Parnell it had wholly different meanings. While Mr. Forster regarded it as implying, in complete corroboration of his own view, the complicity of the Land League in the late outrages, Mr. Parnell confined its meaning to an understanding among themselves of the moonlighters and law-breakers. Driven to violence by the fear of eviction, he believed that these men would under changed circumstances become eager for the maintenance of the law. The position was further complicated by the unfortunate omission on the part of Mr. Parnell, when reading his letter to the House, of the concluding words with regard to the co-operation with the Liberal party. An opportunity was at once afforded for suspicion and for an accusation of "garbling documents." But there seems no reason to question the honesty either of the Irish or of the Government, or the truth of their assertion that there was no bargain. At the same time, it must be confessed that to act upon information thus clandestinely supplied, and to pursue a line of conduct exactly in accordance with that suggested by their opponents, bears a dangerous resemblance to the acceptance of a compact, understood, though not expressed in words. Undoubtedly there was room for misapprehension. Mr. Forster's interpretation of the word "conspiracy" could easily be adopted, and the transaction be so represented as to assume the form of an arrangement with criminals, by which, in exchange for liberty and for the granting of their demands, they were not only to put an end to their criminality, but to become useful party allies. Regarded by the Opposition in this light, the transaction became known as the Treaty of Kilmainham, and afforded a fine opportunity for party invective.

Ireland was as usual the victim of party government. It has always proved impossible to carry out consistently any great experiment in the presence of bitter Parliamentary opposition. Every delay in the realisation of the expected result, every trip however slight on the part of the Administration, is at once taken up by the Opposition; and experiment, which in politics as in other matters requires cool patience and a persevering disregard of first and immaterial results, is rendered impossible. The best-intentioned Government is driven to imperfect shifts and petty improvements, which produce little else than increased disorder,

*Ireland the
victim of party
government.*

In the present instance it was inevitable that the attempt to come to terms with the Irish Parliamentary party should excite angry passion, for an event had occurred in Dublin which might well upset the equanimity even of the most phlegmatic politician.

It was generally understood that Lord Frederick Cavendish, who succeeded Mr. Forster as Irish Secretary, was to be the exponent of the modified policy of the Government; repression was henceforward to be repression of outrage, and not of political opinion. Yet this messenger of peace had scarcely set foot in the island, on Saturday the 6th of May, when as he and the Under Secretary, Mr. Burke, were quietly walking through Phoenix Park they were attacked by four ruffians and stabbed to death. The assassins escaped without detection. Seldom has any event so moved the public mind. The sudden and unexpected character of the crime, the popularity of the victims, the bitter irony of the situation, excited an unprecedented feeling of anger and sympathy. The few hours however that intervened before Parliament assembled on the Monday evening allowed time for the country to recover somewhat from the shock. There was no undignified outbreak of anger in the House, but Government accepted the lesson of the terrible crime, and setting aside all other measures however pressing proceeded at once with its "Prevention of Crimes Bill."

This Bill, introduced by Sir William Harcourt on the following day, was undoubtedly very stringent in its character. As juries could not be trusted, special tribunals consisting of three judges were to be appointed by the Lord Lieutenant; the police were to have the right of search in proclaimed districts by night and day; the Alien Act was to be so modified as to allow of the immediate arrest of suspicious strangers; and two stipendiary magistrates were to be authorised to exercise summary jurisdiction in cases of secret societies, of assaults on the police, or of intimidation. The Act was to be in force for three years.

Side by side with this measure, and pressed forward with the same haste, was the Arrears Bill, introduced by Mr. Gladstone on the 15th of May. It was practically a reproduction of the clauses with regard to arrears in Mr. Redmond's Bill. The arrangement was to be compulsory in all cases where inability to pay the arrears could be proved, where the holding was under £30 a year, and where the last year's rent had been paid. In such cases the State would make a free gift of half the arrears, and the remainder would then be cancelled. The £2,000,000 which would probably be

required to give the tenants this free start was to be supplied chiefly from the Irish Church Fund, and the residue from a special Parliamentary grant.

There was enough in these two Bills to afford opportunity for a lengthened and bitter opposition. The Irish party would accept nothing short of conciliation without coercion, and subjected each clause of the Prevention of Crimes Bill to every sort of opposition which the forms of the House allowed. It was not till after a sitting of thirty hours, and the suspension of nearly all the Irish members, that the clause with respect to the assessment of damages in the case of outrage was got through the House. And only by the application of the new rules of urgency **Crimes Bill carried, July 12.** was the Bill ultimately read the third time. It became law on the 12th of July.

The passage of the Arrears Bill produced no such striking incident, yet every point of objection was taken by the Conservatives. The evil of saddling the Consolidated Fund with a fresh charge, the advantages of a loan rather than a free gift to the tenants, of voluntary rather than compulsory arrangements, of a wholly new peasant proprietary rather than the perpetuation of the existing tenants, the aggravation of the breach already made in the laws of political economy, the wickedness of teaching the Irish that outrages produced concessions, aggravated by the crowning crime of the Kilmainham treaty, were each in turn urged against the Bill. The Government was however firm, and strong in numbers got their measure through the House on the 21st of July without any serious alteration.

Before it became law, difficulties arose between the two Houses similar to those which had marked the preceding year. **Arrears Bill in the Lords.** Amendments were carried in the House of Lords which threatened to completely destroy its value. Lord Salisbury chose for his first objection its compulsory character, and proposed that the landlord should be free to refuse to compound for his arrears. This amendment virtually put into the hands of the landlord the power of limiting the efforts of the State to relieve the suffering tenants. His second amendment was to the effect that if a tenant sold his tenant right, the arrears which by the Bill would have been lost to the landlord should be a first charge upon the price received. In other words, there was to be no complete wiping out of arrears.

It was impossible to accept these amendments; yet the crisis, considering the late events in Ireland, was so severe that it was equally impossible that the Lords should force a quarrel between the

Houses. Such a quarrel would have led to the dropping of the Bill, and even the Conservatives felt that this would be disastrous. Some slight concessions, therefore, from Mr. Gladstone proved sufficient. He introduced the necessity of a mutual notice of ten days between landlord and tenant before a case was brought into Court; and he accepted the amendment with regard to the sale of tenant right, though confining its application to seven years, and limiting the amount of arrears to be paid to half the value of the tenant right. These and some other small concessions satisfied the Lords, with the exception of Lord Salisbury; but, finding the feeling against renewed opposition too strong to be resisted, the leader of the Opposition declared that, although his objections were as strong as ever, he would not divide the House. The Arrears Bill received the royal assent on the 18th of August.

The release of the political prisoners and the changes in the Irish executive were regarded, at all events by the opponents of the Ministry, as a new departure and a change of policy. In seeking for its cause, party perversity was gratified by finding it in a scandalous treaty with outrage-mongers. Yet a more simple explanation was ready to hand. There was no new policy, and any change in the method of carrying out what had all along been the Government's object—the simultaneous suppression of outrage and conciliation of Irish feeling—was quite in accordance with the character of the Prime Minister. More than

**Review of
Forster's Irish
work.**

once Mr. Gladstone had the greatness to acknowledge failure, and to attempt, not always with the happiest results, to retrace his steps. And there can be little question that the government of Ireland under Mr. Forster had proved a failure. Few statesmen of modern time have suffered from so unjust a load of obloquy. To few have motives more utterly abhorrent to his real character been attributed; yet as Secretary of Ireland he had unquestionably failed. A man of gentle and affectionate feeling, he was systematically charged with cruelty. With an anxious desire to ameliorate the condition of Ireland and to treat the country with absolute justice, he became the object of the bitterest invective, and was regarded by the leaders of the Irish party as a tyrannical oppressor. From what is known of his character and aims, it appears far more probable that the cause of his failure was to be found in the twofold and almost contradictory points of view from which he faced the Irish question. The main charge against him, apart from what were merely expressions of party malevolence, was that everything he did in the way of repression was done too late. He entered upon office with

a strong belief that he had but to lay his hands on a certain number of irreconcilable but somewhat insignificant foes to allow Irishmen to accept even with gratitude the offered measures of reconciliation. He could not believe that his colleagues in Parliament would lend themselves to criminal outrage. It was under the influence of this feeling that he obtained the Protection Act with its strange unconstitutional peculiarities. It was under the same influence that he employed it for months only against insignificant persons. But if he had a tenderness for the Irish, he had an unusually strong detestation of what appeared to him the mean and cowardly methods of intimidation which were rife in the country. And as by degrees it was forced upon his mind that the Land League and the outrages were connected, if not ostensibly yet in very fell reality, his hatred of oppression blazed out and got the better, at all events in expression, of the really kindly feeling which underlay it. There thus arose a widespread belief that of the two lines of policy pursued by Government, he was answerable for that which was coercive, while conciliation was attributed to Mr. Gladstone. As a matter of fact, he took a very large share both in the arrangement of the Land Act and of the subsequent Arrears Act; and throughout his letters and private utterances abundant proof is to be found that his spirit was well-nigh broken by the necessity under which, as he believed, he lay of having recourse to methods of an arbitrary character.

There is some difficulty in deciding the exact cause of his resignation. In all probability it was what appeared to him the inexcusable laxity of the Government in releasing the Kilmainham prisoners without sufficient security for their good behaviour. He said afterwards that it was because he was not furnished with more extensive powers; but there must have been some misunderstanding here, as he himself had drafted the Crimes Bill which had been placed before the Cabinet, and which with very slight alteration was introduced into Parliament.

After the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish, Mr. Trevelyan accepted the position of Chief Secretary, under Lord Spencer, the new Lord Lieutenant, both of them being members of the Cabinet. Change of policy in any large sense there was none under this change of personnel. Conciliation and enforcement of order going hand-in-hand remained, as before, the policy of the Government. But no doubt there was a modification of method. Armed with the new Crimes Act, a law of unusual stringency, and perhaps warned by the late terrible

Mr. Trevelyan
as Irish
Secretary.

experience, the executive showed a firmer front to agrarian excesses. Less determined than Mr. Forster to find close connection between the League and outrage, Mr. Trevelyan was able to give better effect to conciliatory measures. Not that there was any immediate cessation either of agitation or of outrage. On the contrary, the year was marked by a terrible succession of murders. In June, in two different places, land agents were shot from behind loopholed walls. In August a crime of unparalleled magnitude took place at Maamtrasna; a whole family of Joyces, six in number, were ruthlessly murdered because it was believed that they had some knowledge of the perpetrators of several preceding murders in that district. Even so late in the year as November an attempt was made to assassinate Mr. Justice Lawson in Dublin, and a Mr. Field was stabbed outside his own house. But, either by an improvement in the police organisation or from some other cause, the entire impunity of the murderers had disappeared. It is true that the June murderers were not discovered, but the perpetrators of the crime at Maamtrasna were convicted and condemned to death, as were also several other murderers who had hitherto escaped detection.

In the political world also there was no immediate sign of any relaxation of irritation. Following the example of
 National League, Oct. 1882. previous agitators, the leaders of the Irish party found means to evade the suppression of the Land League. A great conference was held in October in Dublin, and there upon the ruins of the old Land League a new National League was called into existence. Its objects, as put forth by Mr. Parnell, were "national self-government, Land Law reform, local self-government, extension of the Parliamentary and municipal franchises, and the development and encouragement of the labour and industrial interests of Ireland." It was thought that the attempt to form such a League would bring to light, or perhaps cause, a breach in the Irish National party. It was known that Mr. Davitt by no means agreed with Mr. Parnell on the question of land. He had adopted the theories of Mr. Henry George, and was entirely in favour of the nationalisation of land, while the nominal leader of the party would have been contented with the establishment of a large peasant proprietary. And in fact in America a split did take place. The followers of the *Irish World* henceforth spoke with some contempt of the Irish Parliamentarians. But in Ireland itself no such result followed, Mr. Davitt as usual subordinating his own views to what he regarded as the general advantage of his party. But although the improvement was not very marked, there was

undoubtedly a general feeling that things were looking a little better under the rule of Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan. The Land Court was fully and vigorously in action with very good results, and it was an encouraging symptom that the Government had been able to bring to trial and obtain evidence and conviction in cases of flagrant crime, without having had recourse to the extraordinary powers given them by the Crimes Act.

But the Government had not wholly abstained from the use of their extraordinary powers. They had been intrusted with wide powers of inquiry, even in cases where no definite charge could be alleged against any individual.

Arrest of the
Invincibles,
Jan. 1883.

The fruit of such inquiries was seen when, early in January, seventeen men were suddenly apprehended in Dublin, among them a Town Councillor of the name of James Carey. They were charged with a conspiracy to murder, and the inquiries carried on resulted in very startling revelations. Chiefly on the evidence of informers, of whom the most prominent was James Carey, the existence of a secret society, composed largely of ex-Fenians and called "the Invincibles," was brought to light. It was arranged with all the precautions usual in such societies, no member of it knew the names of the other members, and orders were dealt out by a mysterious person known as "No. 1." It became clear that during the whole of the last year the chief officials, and especially Mr. Forster himself, had been marked out for assassination, and had only escaped by strange accidental miscalculations. In the same way the perpetrators of several of the late outrages were brought to light; and at length, upon the evidence of Carey, the whole details of the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish were established. The murderers were sent to the gallows. The informer, who by his own confession was the principal instigator of the deed, saved his life for the moment, only to meet punishment at the hands of his late confederates. He was murdered before the end of the year in South Africa, where he was seeking safety.

Curiosity is naturally roused by the unfolding of secret schemes of assassination, but at this time the public interest was chiefly excited by the expectation that the inquiries in Dublin would throw light on the connection between the Land League and outrage. The evidence of the informers however failed to implicate the League as an organisation in any criminal action. There were, on the contrary, signs that the Invincibles thoroughly despised the Parliamentary methods of the Irish party. But the names of certain individual members of the League had been mentioned by the witnesses;

and those who had already made up their minds upon the question saw in the evidence produced at the trial fresh proof in support of their opinion. This view found expression in a vehement attack in Parliament by Mr. Forster on Mr. Parnell in February 1883. The Dublin trials were still going on when Parliament met, and for

**Forster's
speech against
Parnell, Feb.
1883.**

eleven nights the Government had to stand upon the defensive as the Address was debated. The chief topics were the events in Ireland, and the ex-Secretary took the opportunity of delivering a straightforward and scathing assault upon the Irish leader, charging him in plain words, not indeed with having directly planned or perpetrated outrages, but with having connived at them, and with having never used his great influence to prevent them. Mr. Parnell's reply was not satisfactory. He avoided the real point at issue, and confined himself to bitter recrimination. The effect was to excite in many minds a confirmed belief in Mr. Forster's charges. In Ireland itself, as was to be expected, the effect was different. It merely increased the confidence felt in the national leader, and the admiration which he excited. From henceforth he assumed an attitude of uncompromising hatred to the Ministry, rejecting all idea of conciliation, and declaring that by means of the Irish vote he held the fate of English parties in his hand. Never had Mr. Parnell been more powerful. Even the voice of the Church was raised against him in vain. On presenting him with a great national testimonial (December 11, 1883), his friends found opportunity to declare the futility of the interference of Rome; and, before the year was over, even the sacred territory of Ulster, so long the home of Orange influence, was invaded, and Mr. Parnell's chief lieutenant, Mr. Healy, succeeded in capturing a vacant seat at Monaghan. During the remainder of Mr. Gladstone's tenure of office, although Ireland was far from being in an orderly or satisfactory condition, there was a lull in the extreme forms of agitation.

The ever-present and absorbing difficulties of the Irish question had arisen somewhat unexpectedly, and were the more unwelcome because the hands of Government were already fully occupied with several critical questions of foreign policy. It was on foreign policy that they had chiefly attacked their predecessors; and it was the reaction against the too exclusive attention which Lord Beaconsfield had given to the extension of English prestige which had been the primary cause of the fall of his Government. Mr. Gladstone, if he was to gratify his more fervid supporters, was almost bound to modify what they had again and again declared

**Mr. Glad-
stone's foreign
policy.**

to be the ill-judged imperialism of the late Ministry. Yet some measure of continuity is absolutely necessary in transacting business with foreign countries; nor indeed do the traditions of party government in England allow, upon every change of Ministry, of a reversal of the course of foreign policy, or even of any serious interference with it. It is only slowly and unostentatiously that a desired change of policy can be introduced. Mr. Gladstone's Government could act only within the limits of this restriction.

In Afghanistan alone was any entire change of policy visible. Already in an earlier chapter (vol. iv., page 544) the history of the course of events has been so far forestalled that there is no need to pursue the subject further. All idea of occupying any part of the country, or advancing the frontier beyond the limits of the mountains, or of establishing a permanent protectorate, was abandoned; and after some difficulty, some disaster, and some stirring deeds of arms, it was found possible to withdraw the English troops, to allow the authority of the Ameer, Abdurahman, to be established, and to rely on the friendship of an independent State, rather than on the immediate exercise of English authority, for security against the advance of encroaching Powers.

There still remained three questions of considerable difficulty. While the Foreign Office found its hands full, with the attempt to bring the Eastern question to a satisfactory conclusion, and with the delicate diplomacy rendered necessary by international intervention in Egypt, the Colonial Office was met by ever-increasing difficulties in South Africa. In all these cases the Government at first accepted the state of things as they found it. With the Turkish question they were fairly successful. In Egypt and in South Africa events happened which continued to occupy their attention for some years; and the policy they pursued in handling these events was very different, and led to very different results.

The Treaty of Berlin, the consummation of the foreign policy of the late Ministry, had excited bitter invectives from the Liberal party; but there were certain parts of that Treaty with which they heartily agreed. They had, indeed, no sympathy with the Anglo-Turkish agreement, in so far as it included the acquisition by England of territory in the East or the guarantee of Turkish dominions. But they regarded as of the first importance the conditions which were appended to these engagements, and the increased responsibility for good government which they laid upon the Porte. They had no idea of upholding a one-sided

Enforcement of
the Treaty of
Berlin.

bargain. If they were bound by national honour to maintain agreements entered into by their predecessors, they were also bound to insist on the fulfilment of the accompanying stipulations. It thus became a primary object of their policy to compel Turkey to throw aside its dilatory disregard of the duties laid upon it by the Berlin Treaty. The instrument by which they intended to apply coercion to Turkey was the united voice of Europe.

The Treaty had required improved government in Armenia, and considerable cessions of territory both to Montenegro and Greece; but there was no sign that the Porte was likely to fulfil its duties in any of these respects. In order to hasten its action, it was thought desirable to send out an ambassador of more than common authority. The mission was entrusted to Mr. Goschen. Though he had found himself debarred from joining the Ministry by his scruples with regard to the extension of the franchise to the agricultural labourer, which was a part of the Government programme, there was no reason why his great ability should be allowed to rust in idleness. A fitting employment was found for him as Envoy Extraordinary at Constantinople. None of the stipulations of the Treaty had been properly carried out. There was no improvement in the general administration. The Kurds were still raiding in Armenia, and destroying villages by the hundred. The promised gendarmerie had not been created. Brigandage was rife. As to the Greek frontier, no sort of agreement seemed likely to be arrived at; while all mention of withdrawal from the ceded districts in the neighbourhood of Montenegro encountered bitter opposition from the Mahomedan Albanians, certainly not without the connivance of the Porte. Mr. Goschen's instructions were to press upon the Sultan, without open threat, yet with a distinct indication that there was something behind, the absolute necessity of putting an end to his procrastination. This "something" was the European concert, which was beginning at length to become a reality.

A conference was held at Berlin, and the representatives of the Powers found themselves so far in agreement as to be able to join in an identic Note, informing Turkey that their object in assembling in conference was to determine finally the proper line of frontier between Turkey and Greece. They proceeded to carry out their work harmoniously; and in July the frontier on which they had agreed was marked out and communicated to the Porte. It was also found possible to maintain unbroken the concerted action of Europe on the question of the cessions to be

**Action of the
European
Concert.**

made to Montenegro, although this question was beset with greater difficulties. The rulers of Turkey were now, as always, very loath to admit the interference of Europe; and it cannot be denied that there was much weight in the excuses urged by them to cover their determination to resist it as long as possible. It was only natural that they should resent being deprived, entirely without their sanction, of considerable portions of their territory. The opposition of the Albanians was also a very real obstacle to the completion of the cessions; the semi-independent tribes had formed themselves into a national league, numerous and warlike enough to become very formidable. With some difficulty the conflicting views of the European Powers were brought into agreement by the substitution of the district of Dulcigno for the districts mentioned in the Treaty of Berlin, and the Porte was invited to join the Powers in giving effect to the treaty thus modified. The reply, given in August, was not satisfactory. Turkey consented in principle to the cession of Dulcigno, but declined to join in any forcible attempt to coerce its Albanian subjects.

In order to bring matters to a point, it was thought necessary that a great combined naval demonstration should be organised. Restricted by a declaration of disinterestedness, which now formed the usual initial step in such operations, the joint fleet assembled in September 1881, under the command of Sir Beauchamp Seymour. It did not at first produce the expected result, for a change of ministry in Constantinople placed in office men still more determined to resist than their predecessors had been. So ineffective indeed did the demonstration appear, that Lord Salisbury allowed himself to say of it, that "if six washing-tubs with the flags of the different nations had been sent to the Adriatic, they would have produced as much effect." Nor was he much exaggerating the facts. When the English admiral negotiated with the Prince of Montenegro for an advance of his troops upon the disputed provinces, in co-operation with the fleet, he was told that the Prince not unnaturally declined to risk a Turkish war without a guarantee of assistance from the European Powers. But when the admiral applied to the Powers, he found that not one of them was willing to second any active measure. The idle threat of the combined fleet only served to strengthen the hands of the Porte, and called forth a vigorous reply, in which the Sultan assumed a dignified tone of injured innocence, and demanded his right to exercise his sovereignty unfettered on all the points at issue.

The diplomacy of Europe, threatening but afraid to strike, seemed

to have been entirely abortive. Yet most unexpectedly within a week an entire change occurred. The reason is not clear. It may have been a threat on the part of England to sequester the revenues of Smyrna and other ports. It may have been the promise of France and Germany that if Dulcigno was yielded the more disastrous effects to be apprehended from the naval demonstration might be avoided. At all events, on the 26th of November the Turkish general, Dervish Pasha, having fought his way into Dulcigno, surrendered it to Montenegro; and the object of the demonstration having been thus obtained, the combined fleet at once dispersed.

Still more complicated was the solution of the difficulty with Greece.

**Settlement of
Greek
difficulty.**

There were three parties in the quarrel. The Powers demanded the new modified frontier settled by the Berlin Conference; Turkey insisted on a still more restricted cession; Greece demanded the performance in full of the Berlin Treaty. That little country had assumed a most warlike attitude. The Minister, Tricoupis, too peaceful in his tendencies to suit the popular feeling, was driven from office, and Coumoundouros put in his place. To avoid war seemed impossible. Both Turkey and Greece were rapidly collecting troops on the frontier; an attempted arbitration was rejected. It seemed as though the Powers would be called upon either to sit idly by while war was waged, or to use their strength to coerce Greece in whose interest they were supposed to be acting. At length however the Conference of Ambassadors, which continued to sit at Constantinople in constant negotiation with the Porte, succeeded, under the lead of Mr. Goschen and the German ambassador, in marking out a new frontier by which the whole of Thessaly and a portion of Epirus was ceded to Greece; while the great bone of contention, the fortress of Janina, was left to Turkey. It was then formally intimated to Greece that unless this frontier was accepted, no assistance could be expected from Europe. The Greek Cabinet yielded to this pressure, but only under protest. The way was further cleared by a complete victory of Dervish Pasha, which broke up the formidable Albanian League. A Convention was at length signed, and by November Greece occupied its newly acquired territory. Thus, in spite of a long delay, in spite of the Opposition jeers which had constantly mocked the slow course of their diplomacy, the Ministry succeeded in making good their policy. The European concert remained unbroken; war had been avoided; and, though with some important modification, the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty had been enforced.

The attitude of the Porte in the Egyptian difficulties, which arose immediately afterwards, was the natural result of the means by which this success had been reached. There ^{Difficulties in Egypt.} is no difficulty under the circumstances in understanding the desire of the Porte to assert its sovereignty in Egypt, its extreme unwillingness to admit European interference, and its lukewarmness in using its influence and arms for the purpose of restoring order. No less natural was the wish of Lord Granville and the English Cabinet to restore the self-respect of the Turkish Government, and, by acknowledging and making use both of its influence and arms in Egypt, to attempt to remove the soreness caused by the late events.

The Conservative Government had left its successor a difficult problem in Egypt. The great financial interests at stake had induced the European Powers to interfere in the country, to restrain the wild misgovernment and spendthrift extravagance of Ismail. It had however been generally acknowledged that France, as the great Mediterranean Power with an Egyptian connection of long standing, and England, as the ruler of India, had more than mere financial interests at stake in the well-being of Egypt. An agreement had been made by which a joint control exercised by France and England had been established. Ismail having been removed from the throne in June 1879, it was under this dual superintendence that his son Tewfik was called upon to govern his dominions. There was a strong feeling in England in favour of the assumption of some more complete command in the country, either by direct annexation or under some form of protectorate; but, on the other hand, there was among a large section of the Liberals a dislike to any addition to the responsibilities of the empire. It was between these two extremes of party feeling that the new Ministry had to steer their way. They accepted at first, in this as in other cases, the action of their predecessors. But they refused to go a step beyond it. Their efforts were directed to honest co-operation with France, in carrying out a work intrusted to them by the European Powers. This work they regarded as the supervision of the Egyptian Government. They would listen to no suggestion of taking any part of that Government upon themselves. It is obvious that the line they adopted was in the last degree critical. Differences of opinion might at any moment arise between themselves and their French colleagues; the direction of a Government by moral persuasion, and without the use of force, is likely either to be ineffective or by gradual steps to lose its purely persuasive character. It took nearly the whole of their tenure of power, a period of checkered

fortune, of much disaster and much mismanagement, to clear away these difficulties and to place England in a position to carry out successfully its task of Egyptian regeneration.

As has been said, it was upon financial grounds that Europe had interfered. Before any reforms in administration or justice could be carried out, something like equilibrium had to be established between the revenue and the expenses. The first great step in this direction was made when the International Commission of Liquidation was appointed in April 1880, and when, on its report in July, the Law of Liquidation was promulgated. This law, which, although it has been modified, is still the basis of the financial arrangements of Egypt, was virtually a composition on the part of Egypt with its creditors on terms dictated by the great Powers. The essential principle of the arrangement was the division of the revenue into two portions, one of which was to be paid to the International Commission of the debt, or, as it was called, the "Caisse de la dette;" the other was devoted to the expense of the administration. The various debts were consolidated under four heads, and the interest payable on them to the bondholders was limited to a sum which it was conceived that Egypt could afford to pay. The amount to be spent on administration was also limited to what was regarded as the proper expenditure of the country. Should there be a surplus in the receipts of the Caisse, the Government had no right to share it; should there be a surplus in the administrative revenue, the Caisse had certain claims upon it. This law was a long step forward, and restored the financial solvency of the country. At the same time, the limit set to expenditure, and the claims of the Caisse (an international body), raised an obstacle in the way of large reforms, and placed the country in a very dependent position with regard to the Powers of Europe. This want of independence was still further increased by the agreements between Turkey and the various European States, known as "The Capitulations;" for the capitulations were held to apply to Egypt as a part of the Turkish Empire.

Originally privileges necessary for the safety of foreigners in the presence of a powerful and unscrupulous Government, the Capitulations had become, as the balance of power changed, serious obstacles in the way of administrative reformation. The exemption of foreigners from taxation, and the necessity of the co-operation of the Consuls in all actions of the police with respect to foreigners, were formidable interferences with the natural rights of an independent nation. It is not unreasonable to suppose that, in

**Financial
reforms in
Egypt.**

The "Capitulations."

spite of the improvement in their financial position, in spite of important reforms in the methods of collecting the taxes, and the substitution of ordinary European processes for the violence of unchecked despotism, intelligent Egyptians might feel bitterly the dependence in which they were placed. And no doubt there was a party among the statesmen and wealthier inhabitants which saw with great dislike the constant interference and employment in high places of foreign officials. It was not however from such men as these, but from the leaders of the army, that the first interruption to what appeared to be the successful course of the new administrative arrangements came.

The army, like the State, was suffering from outside interference; the higher places were filled by Turks and Circassians; the economical efforts of the Dual Control had driven many officers into enforced retirement. At all events the military agitators put themselves forward and were for the time regarded as the leaders of a national party; but the movement rapidly degenerated, and in the hands of ignorant soldiers became an anarchical attack upon all that was best and most progressive in the country, and finally assumed the form of an intolerant assault upon Christianity in favour of Mohamedanism. Early in the year 1881, and again in July, a spirit of insubordination showed itself among the superior officers of the Egyptian army. Various changes in the Ministry were made with a view of satisfying them, but the discontent continued to smoulder until, in September, several regiments broke out into open revolt under the

Arabi's revolt,
1881.

leadership of Ahmed Arabi. Arabi was one of the colonels who had been implicated in the earlier disorders, and there seems little doubt that it was the belief that the Khedive and his Ministers continued to cherish a determination to wreak their vengeance on him which drove him and his followers to their violent courses. Though he at first acted courageously enough, Tewfik's heart failed him at the critical moment, when he found himself surrounded by armed mutineers. He bent to the storm, and dismissed his Minister, Riaz Pasha, from office. With much reluctance Cherif Pasha, the Minister demanded by the insurgents, accepted the vacant position, charging himself with the duty of establishing a constitution, and at the same time increasing the army from 12,000 to 18,000. He insisted, on the other side, upon the withdrawal of the military chiefs from Cairo, and declared his intention of maintaining all international engagements, including the Dual Control. The conditions were fulfilled. The Chamber of Delegates was summoned in December, Arabi and his

confederates withdrew for awhile from Cairo. Probably Cherif had looked for the support of the Chamber in assisting him to establish a really national movement. But the assembled Delegates not unreasonably regarded as useless a constitution which deprived them of all financial power. They demanded for themselves the right of drawing up the Budget. The political agents of the two predominant European Powers considered this a fatal attack upon the position of the Dual Control, to the maintenance of which Cherif was pledged. An ill-judged Note, communicated by France and England, raised in the mind of the Egyptians the idea that active interference was contemplated; its effect was the consolidation of the National party and the determination of the Delegates to cling to what they regarded as their financial rights. It was in vain that Cherif admitted Arabi himself to his Ministry as Under Secretary of War; the opposition was too strong for him, and, honourably anxious to maintain the pledge he had given to the Powers, Cherif found it necessary to resign. A Ministry in which Arabi held the post of Minister of War was called to office under Mahmoud Sami, a man who shared Arabi's views. The army and the extreme Nationalists thus secured a complete triumph.

But the movement had now entered upon a downward course; for there are abundant signs that Arabi was acting with support from Constantinople, while one of the first objects of the real National party had been the exclusion of Turkish influence from Egypt. Nor were proofs wanting of the disastrous results of the military triumph. Anarchy began to spread throughout the country, and the position of the European and Christian population became in the last degree precarious.

Such was the state of affairs which the English Government was called upon to face. Their policy with respect to Egypt was of course subjected to their general foreign policy.

Their chief objects at this time were the maintenance of the European concert, which they regarded as the best machinery for the settlement of international complications, and within this, and of the first importance, the maintenance of friendship with France. As far therefore as Egypt was concerned, they felt it undesirable to act in any way except as the agent of the European Powers, or to thwart the wishes of France if it could possibly be avoided. The joint control, the outcome of a compromise between the interests of France and England, had therefore to be carefully maintained; and during the first months of the new Ministry the two countries had worked hand in hand with considerable success. The Arabist movement now

Gladstone's
Egyptian
policy.

threatened to disturb this amicable arrangement. An agitation which could assume with so much plausibility the title of a Nationalist movement could not but appeal to the sympathies of the English Liberals; while the French, who were credited (and probably correctly) with less interest in the well-being of Egypt than in the advantage of French bondholders, were eager for the suppression of a disturbance which threatened financial prosperity. Though the agents of both Powers on the spot seemed to hope that the quarrel between the Chamber of Delegates and Cherif might be regarded as a purely constitutional struggle, calling for no outside interference, Gambetta, who had lately taken up the reins of office in France, made up his mind that the action of the Chamber was leading to ruin, and that strong measures were necessary to check it. He urged upon the English Ministry the presentation of a joint Note, assuring the Khedive that he might "trust to the united efforts" of England and France "to withstand the causes of the external or internal complications threatening the existing regime in Egypt." Such a Note was not in accordance with the avowed policy of England. In issuing it the Ministry went beyond their mandate from Europe; they took a step which might easily cause difficulties with other Powers, and which was contrary to the prevalent feeling in favour of assuming as little responsibility as possible in the direct government of Egypt. After some hesitation however the Government yielded to their fear of breaking with France, and the joint Note drafted by Gambetta was sent to the Khedive, with the disastrous results already mentioned.

It also gave an opportunity to the Sultan to protest against the unauthorised action of the two Powers in a matter which properly belonged to him as Sovereign. The protest was disregarded by Gambetta; but it was not, apparently, without its effect on Lord Granville, for in January he wrote to Lord Lyons that he wished to maintain the rights of sovereign and vassal as between the Sultan and the Khedive, and that if armed intervention were necessary, Turkish intervention, under close restrictions, would be the most desirable form. The idea of restoring order by the interposition of Turkey was however quite contrary to the views of France; affairs in Tunis had lately strained almost to extremity its good relations with the Porte. The sudden fall of Gambetta's Ministry (January 27, 1882) somewhat altered the position; the desire for active intervention disappeared, and the dread of Turkish intervention became even stronger. A rift had obviously opened between the policy of England and France.

Rift between
English and
French policy.

Meanwhile events in Egypt were hastening onward. A serious incident occurred in May 1882, leading to a breach between the Khedive and his Ministers. A large number of officers had been rewarded for their revolutionary services by promotion, but many Circassians had been omitted from the list of the favoured. They were now accused of having formed a conspiracy to put Arabi to death. Some fifty were apprehended. Tried in secret, and undefended, the greater part of them were exiled for life. It is said that this was but the beginning of a general proscription, and that 300 other names had been already added to the list of victims. The Khedive commuted the sentences of the Circassian officers, and there can be little question as to the rightfulness of this course. But there was a fatal blot in the manner in which the Khedive acted; he had been too evidently under the influence of the English political agent, who had even insisted on being present when the pardons were signed. This obvious interference of the foreigners produced a complete breach between the Khedive and his Ministers. On the 25th of May, immediately after this violent quarrel, emboldened by the arrival of ironclads in Alexandria, the French and English Agents, declaring that they acted in the name of their respective Governments, presented a so-called Ultimatum, demanding the exile of Arabi, with two of his officers, and the resignation of the Ministry. The Khedive received the Ultimatum without the knowledge of his Ministers. In thus acting, he had no doubt infringed the constitution. His Ministry, already estranged, seized the opportunity, and at once resigned (May 26). Great was the excitement caused by this step. From the army, from the Ulemas, and from the people petitions streamed in on the Khedive demanding the restoration of the fallen National Ministry. The demand, backed as it was by the army with an open threat of extreme violence, was irresistible. Arabi and his friends returned in triumph (May 27), and were absolute masters of the situation. The threat was no idle one, for on the 30th of May Mr. Cookson, the English Consul-General, had written to Lord Granville, "Alexandria is in continual danger of being stormed by the soldiery."

Riots in Alexandria, June 11. On the 11th of June the danger became a reality. There was a popular outbreak, in which Mr. Cookson was severely wounded, and more than 200 Europeans killed. It became necessary to take measures for the restoration of order.

Already (May 21), in view of the possible danger to the lives of the Europeans, French and English ironclads had been despatched to Alexandria. While agreeing in this step, the French Ministry had

made it a condition that the Porte should abstain from interference, but they had so far come into the views of England that they had waived their objection to a European Conference. The invitations were actually issued on the 1st of June, but not before Sir Edward Malet had tried the effect of an appeal to Turkey. He requested the Sultan to use his authority as Suzerain for the restoration of order. Nothing, except a European Conference, could be more distasteful to the Porte, which had hoped to increase its influence in Egypt by covert support of Arabi. To stop his action seemed suicidal; but to be obliged to do so by the combined action of Europe would be worse. In dread therefore of the threatened Conference, the Porte despatched a commissioner, Dervish Pasha, who reached Egypt just before the Alexandrian massacre.

**Arrival of
Dervish Pasha,
June 8.**

His presence produced no good result. He refused to take any responsibility, as he was without troops, and instead of exerting his authority for the active suppression of disturbance, he actually allowed the duty of restoring order after the massacre to be placed in the hands of Arabi himself. It was plain that, so far from exerting any controlling influence, the Turkish suzerainty to which Lord Granville had trusted was a mere empty name, without influence either moral or physical. There seemed nothing left but the use of forcible intervention, ordered or allowed by the Conference.

The Conference, which met at the end of June, began by passing a self-denying protocol, in which the Powers pledged themselves to aim at no separate advantage by their joint action. Then, declaring that moral influence had failed, it requested the Sultan to supply the necessary force. He at once joined the Conference, from which he had hitherto held aloof, and accepted the proposal. But the work of the Conference was in fact nugatory; events had been too quick for it.

Arabi, who had collected his troops round Alexandria, had begun to erect fortifications there which threatened the British fleet. Again and again the Khedive, Dervish Pasha, and Admiral Seymour had warned him to desist. At length the Admiral's patience was exhausted, and he proceeded (July 11) to carry out his threat of bombardment. The other foreign ships, including those of France, having already left the harbour, the work fell exclusively upon the English. Though Arabi's resistance was firmer than had been expected, the bombardment was successful and the batteries were silenced. The English sailors on landing found that the army had been entirely withdrawn; but the Admiral, without troops, had no means of following up his success.

**Bombardment
of Alexandria,
July 11.**

Wild riot and destruction raged for several days; the loss of life and property was enormous. Order was at length restored. But, beyond the occupation of the city, which as a matter of course had resulted from the bombardment, no advantage appeared to have been gained; the army had not been defeated, it was still mutinous, and had to be reckoned with.

The policy of non-intervention, culminating in so violent an action as the bombardment of Alexandria, had no lack of bitter and indignant critics. It is in truth difficult to characterise as a policy action which appears to have depended so much on the events of the moment. It would seem however that Lord Granville, though seduced for awhile by the eagerness of Gambetta, had set before himself a line of conduct which, if open to the charge of weakness, was yet fairly consistent. The general drift of this policy was the establishment of a European Conference, at whose instigation Turkey as the Suzerain Power was to be advised to intervene in the cause of order. But though the policy may have been consistent in theory, it had not been consistent in practice. The abstention from interference had not been real; the hand of the English agent had been constantly felt. And it is impossible to acquit the English Government of having suffered a movement to gather strength when they were all along determined to destroy it, and of having ultimately found themselves driven to active intervention without having in any way prepared the means for making it effective.

The first blow once struck however there was no hesitation. A vote of credit was obtained from Parliament (July 27), a portion of the Reserves were called out, and troops were despatched as speedily as possible, to what was evidently the scene of an approaching war. M. de Freycinet, the new French Minister, also demanded a vote of credit. But the opinion of France was strong against interference, the vote of credit was not passed, and M. de Freycinet resigned. The French Assembly by this action declared plainly its disinclination to take any further active share in the quarrel. In the hands of the English alone the campaign was carried out with unexpected success. The military organisation, as reformed by Mr. Cardwell and ably managed by Mr. Childers, proved fairly efficient. Sir Garnet Wolseley was able to carry out his operations almost exactly in accordance with his carefully pre-arranged plan. With extreme secrecy, and after a feigned concentration in Aboukir Bay, he brought his troops through Port Said and the Suez Canal to Ismailia, where he was joined by a contingent from

**Failure of Lord
Granville's
policy.**

**Sir Garnet
Wolseley's
expedition.**

India, bringing up his forces to some 40,000 men. Making the canal his base, he drew Arabi away from the more fertile and highly populated parts of the country, and, after a series of skirmishes with the object of securing the fresh-water canal, finally defeated him at Tel-el-Kebir, September 13, 1882. The blow was decisive and final. Troops were at once launched in pursuit, Cairo was entered, and Arabi taken prisoner. His army disbanded itself, and the soldiers wandered off to their homes. It had been a brilliant piece of work. In the words of Sir Garnet Wolseley's despatch, "the army in twenty-five days had effected a disembarkation at Ismailia, had traversed the desert, had occupied the capital of Egypt, and had fortunately defeated the enemy four times."

It was no longer a work of destruction that was needed, but a work of reconstitution. The defeat of the army at Tel-el-Kebir and the capture of Arabi had destroyed the only power capable for the moment of governing the country. The Khedive and his Ministry (the rightful representatives of the Government) were left powerless. It became a matter of urgent necessity that in some way or other order should be restored, and the lost powers of government replaced in the hands of their legitimate owners. It became a question whether England should undertake the work. In their own interest most of the European Powers desired that Egypt should be well governed, or at any rate solvent. They were willing enough that England, to whom, as they recognised, peace in Egypt was a matter of vital importance, should be at the expense and trouble of carrying out the work of re-establishment, which was properly speaking the duty of all the Powers. The destruction had been the work of English arms; it seemed only fitting that the labour of reconstruction should also fall to England. Yet the position was quite anomalous. It was by a sort of chance that the English Government had found themselves involved in a serious war. They had drifted into an armed intervention, driven by the force of circumstances and not by any will of their own. They had not acted as one of the members of the Dual Control in alliance with France. They had not acted as the mandatory of the general will of Europe. They could no longer claim to be the agents of the European concert. Their help had not been asked for by the Khedive; on the contrary, the army crushed at Tel-el-Kebir had called itself the Khedive's army.

It was necessary to clear up this anomalous position. One fact was plain—Egypt was conquered. The natural alternative seemed to lie between a complete annexation of the conquered country and an

open declaration of a Protectorate. No Liberal Government could contemplate such a step as annexation, nor would the popular feeling have allowed it. But the establishment of a Protectorate seemed both an effective and a possible measure. No opposition was to be expected of a formidable character, except perhaps from France. In Egypt itself the Protectorate would have been warmly welcomed; and there could be no question as to the impetus which the presence of an English Resident, the representative of the protecting Power, would have imparted to the realisation of the contemplated reforms. But the English Government, wisely or unwisely, preferred a far more difficult policy, which appeared to them more consistent with the views they had already declared. They determined to occupy the position of adviser to the Egyptian Government, which should itself carry out a national reform. In a circular addressed to the great Powers in January 1883, Lord Granville thus explains the policy of his Government: "Although," he says, "for the present a British force remains in Egypt for the preservation of public tranquillity, her Majesty's Government are desirous of withdrawing it as soon as the state of the country and the organisation of proper means for the maintenance of the Khedive's authority will admit of it. In the mean time the position in which her Majesty's Government are placed towards his highness imposes upon them the duty of giving advice with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character and possess the elements of stability and progress." Such an attitude has in it something of hollowness. The desire to educate the Egyptians, to raise them till they are fit for self-government, and then to leave them alone, is admirable. But advice, to be of value in such circumstances, must be taken. If it is not taken, it must be forced upon the recipient. And this became apparent when exactly a year later Lord Granville wrote to Sir Evelyn Baring, the Consul-General: "It should be made clear to the Egyptian Ministers and Governors of provinces that the responsibility which for a time rests on England obliges her Majesty's Government to insist on the adoption of the policy which they recommend, and that it will be necessary that those Ministers and Governors who do not follow this course should cease to hold their office." It is difficult to see how a giver of compulsory advice differs from a Protector, except in the looseness with which his responsibilities hang on him.

Whether the attitude thus assumed was a wise one or not, the practical work of reconstitution was taken up in earnest. Lord Dufferin

was despatched in November 1882 to examine the whole situation, and to lay the groundwork of the various necessary reforms. He rapidly removed the obstacles from his way. The Dual Control ceased at the request of the Egyptian Government, and in spite of the opposition of France. The trial of Arabi, which had been a cause of warm dispute between the Egyptian Ministry and England, was brought to a conclusion. The secret and vindictive process by which his countrymen wished to deal with him had been withstood by the English Ministry, who demanded for him at least an open trial. Lord Dufferin arranged a compromise. Arabi pleaded guilty of rebellion before a Court Martial, and was sentenced to death, a sentence immediately commuted by the Khedive into deportation to Ceylon. This act of grace was not performed without a Ministerial crisis; Riaz Pasha and most of the Ministry resigned, but fortunately Cherif continued to hold the Premiership. With his patriotic co-operation the reforms quickly began to assume shape. A financial adviser, Sir Edgar Vincent, was appointed. Steps were taken for the creation of a small Egyptian army under General Evelyn Wood. A native constabulary was raised under General Baker. Mr. Clifford Lloyd, who before long proved too energetic for his place, set to work at the establishment of a police force, and the reform of the prisons and hospitals. Public works were placed under Captain Scott-Moncrieff, who busied himself chiefly with improvements in irrigation; and over the judicial reforms Sir Benson Maxwell was appointed with the title of "Procureur-General of the Native Tribunals."

Lord Dufferin's
reforms in
Egypt.

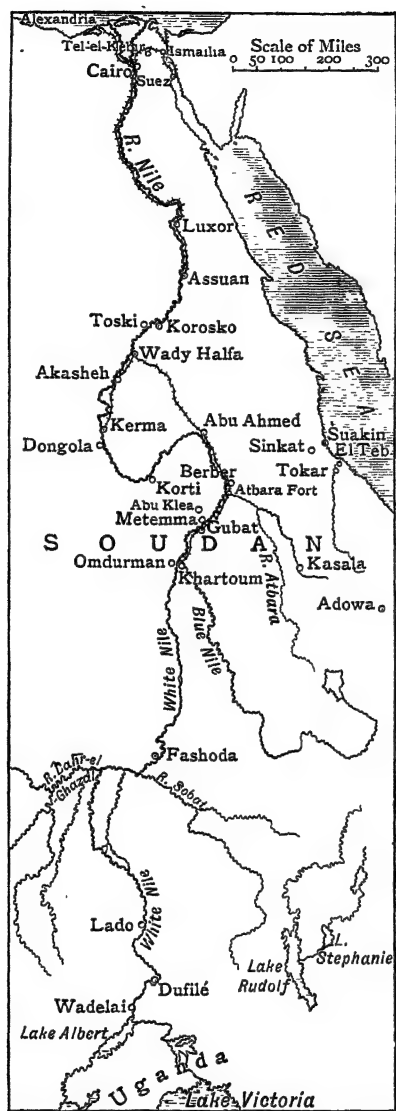
But all these promising reforms were suddenly checked for a time. A fearful epidemic of cholera swept over the country, finding no less than 30,000 victims; and before the Government had recovered from the paralysis thus caused, the appearance of the Mahdi in the Soudan compelled it to turn all its attention in that direction. It would seem that here the real weakness of the position which the English Government had chosen became apparent. For while, by the presence of English troops and the employment of English Ministers and superintendents, the Government at home were obviously charging themselves with the duty of re-establishing Egypt, they positively refused to accept any responsibility with regard to events in the Soudan. Fully conscious of the inability of Egypt to hold its extended empire, they did not insist on such a diminution of the area of the country and such a concentration of its forces as seemed to be rendered necessary by its diminished

Appearance of
the Mahdi in
the Soudan.

power. They allowed the Egyptian army, under Hicks Pasha, to embark on the hopeless project of the reconquest of the Soudan, only to meet with entire annihilation at the hands of the Mahdi, November 5, 1883. Then, when too late, the pressure of England being at last brought to bear, the Egyptian Ministry under Cherif resigned, Nubar Pasha succeeded to his place, and the evacuation of the Soudan was determined on.

It was an operation of the most extreme difficulty, especially as the English Government clung to its determination of withholding armed assistance to the Egyptians. A man was found whose character and antecedents afforded some hope of his ability to save the situation. General Gordon, who had previously ruled Upper Egypt with success, proved willing to undertake the withdrawal of the scattered garrisons whose existence was threatened by the advance of the Mahdi. Trusting to his own unequalled power of influencing half-civilised races, he undertook the duty without the assistance of English troops. There was a distinct understanding, as Lord Hartington stated (April 3), "that there was to be no expedition for the relief of Khartoum or any garrison in the Soudan." It was a task beyond his power. All hope of a peaceful conclusion to his mission speedily vanished. The insurrection spread on all sides; the Mahdi's troops captured one after the other the Egyptian garrisons. On the west Osman Digna representing the Mahdi besieged the fortresses of Tokar and Sinkat, and advanced almost within reach of Suakin. The relief of Tokar was entrusted to Baker Pasha, with the Egyptian Gendarmerie. Not yet formed as soldiers, they were no match for the Arabs. The square unexpectedly attacked on its march was immediately broken; the whole army fled, leaving 2200 on the field (February 5). Sinkat and Tokar at once surrendered. The fear lest the insurrection should reach the coast and spread into Arabia, thus disastrously affecting the Indian high road, forced upon England the necessity of defending Suakin. Thither General Graham was despatched, and there he succeeded in winning the battle of El Teb over Osman Digna, and in checking the Arab advance by subsequent operations. The hand of England had thus been in some degree forced; it had been found impossible to decline all responsibility, impossible to avoid recourse to arms; and now the news that General Gordon was surrounded in Khartoum roused in England an overwhelming feeling that British troops must be used in this direction also. As early as March 23, 1884, the Mahdi's troops had begun to fire upon the city, and Gordon, driven to the defensive, had been giving

Gordon in
Khartoum.



THE NILE VALLEY.

proof of his resourceful vigour. But before long Khartoum was so closely invested that no certain news of what happened there could be obtained. A universal cry arose in England for the relief of Gordon. Yet the Government continued to hesitate. Though they were fully determined to send an army of relief, there was a great division of opinion as to the most desirable route to be adopted; months were wasted in discussing the question whether Khartoum should be approached by the Red Sea and Berber, or by the longer but better-known route up the Nile. A vote of credit, nominally for preparations only, was demanded before the close of the session, and seemed to prove that an expedition was in contemplation. But there were still some weeks of fatal delay; it was not till the 1st of

**Wolseley's
expedition to
Khartoum,
Sept. 1, 1884.**

September that Lord Wolseley, who had been chosen to command the expedition, sailed from England. When once active operations had begun, there was no lack of energy or good management. The difficulties which of necessity occurred in moving an army in small boats up a river broken with cataracts were gradually surmounted, but it was not till December that Korti was reached. Aware of the necessity of haste, Wolseley from thence sent forward General Herbert Stewart, with a detachment of some 2000 men, to cut off a great curve of the river by a direct march across the desert to Metemma. General Stewart, fighting successfully two well-contested battles on the way, at Abu Klea and Gubat, arrived again at the river. He had been mortally wounded in the last engagement, and had given up the command to Sir Charles Wilson. Several of Gordon's ironclad steamers were found at Metemma, ready to receive the relieving troops. Wilson thought it necessary to make a reconnaissance below Metemma before proceeding further. The

**Fall of Khar-
toum, Jan. 26,
1885.**

delay may have been necessary, but it was certainly fatal to the success of the expedition. On the 28th of January, Wilson with a small detachment of troops steamed up to Khartoum, only to find the flag of the Mahdi waving over it, the place having been occupied and General Gordon killed just two days before.

Gordon was a man cast in heroic mould. His virtues, his faults, and his eccentricities were alike full of grandeur. His strange and varied career, the mastery he everywhere displayed over the half-civilised races with whom he had chiefly had to deal, the charm of his personality, the hold he acquired on the love and fidelity of his followers, had given him a unique place in the admiration of the nation. The dramatic incidents attending the tragic close of the life of such

a man excited the deepest feeling throughout the country. From all sides the most bitter reproaches were directed against the Ministers, who were held to have deserted him ^{Death of Gordon.} and by their procrastination to have caused his ruin. The fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon were in fact the death-blow of the Ministry. No doubt their misdeeds were grossly exaggerated, yet it is not possible to free them from blame.

The whole of their conduct during the unfortunate year of 1884 was marked by irresolution and weakness. The anomalous position they had insisted in taking up produced a ^{Drifting policy of Government.} tissue of blunders and misunderstandings. Believing that the evacuation of the Soudan was a financial and political necessity, they yet declined responsibility in the matter, and allowed Hicks Pasha to march to his ruin, and Baker Pasha, unaided, to be annihilated in his efforts to relieve Tokar. They then suddenly made use of their practical authority to insist upon the retirement from Upper Egypt. But, regardless of the immense difficulty of the operation, they sent no assistance to the Egyptian Government, but trusted entirely to the individual efforts of Gordon. Again they blundered from a want of definition of their responsibilities and duties. It was uncertain then, and is hardly certain now, whether Gordon went out as representative of the English or the Egyptian Government. It seems to have been agreed when he started that he was to receive orders from the English Government only. And certainly the Government, through Lord Granville, had, on the 19th of February, publicly declared their responsibility for everything that Gordon did. Yet before he left Cairo he was suffered to accept from the Khedive the title of Governor-General of the Soudan, and appears to have been instructed not only to withdraw the garrisons, but to establish some form of independent government. It is certain that he so understood his duties. But every suggestion that he made, every request that he proffered for the purpose of carrying out what he considered the object of his mission was refused, and apparently regarded as implying an excess of zeal on his part. He was not allowed to use Zebehr, the great slave dealer, to counteract the influence of the Mahdi; he was not allowed to obtain the assistance of Turkish troops or of the Indian troops at Wady Halfa; he was not allowed to confer personally, as he desired, with the Mahdi, or to open the road between Suakin and Berber; and, chief blunder of all, a quarrel as to the route of the relieving army was suffered to waste months of valuable time.

The fall of Khartoum sealed the fate of the Soudan. The troops

gradually fell back. A vigorous but not very successful attempt was made to reopen the line between Suakin and Berber, with all the most complete apparatus, such as a railway and vast pumps for supplying water to the troops. The expedition met with no disaster, but encountered opposition of unexpected strength, and as the Indian troops employed were required elsewhere, the operation was given up, the railway apparatus sent back to England, the withdrawal from the Soudan concluded, and Wady Halfa made the extreme limit of the Egyptian frontier. The chances of invasion from the Mahdi still remained however so strong, that an army of not less than 14,000 men was left in the country.

In spite of all this terrible blundering—indeed, in some degree on account of it—the condition of Egypt was extraordinarily improved before the dissolution of Parliament and change of Ministry in 1885. The Convention of London (April 1885) may be regarded as the starting-point of the successful renovation of the country. From the first it had been recognised that finance lay at the bottom of the Egyptian question. The law of liquidation of 1880 had certainly been a long step forward; but it had in it one point of weakness, an error which has been common in many financial arrangements. It had insisted, not only on the payment of the interest of the debts, but on the establishment of a sinking fund. Thus, when the resources set apart for the payment of the debt and therefore payable to the Caisse were larger, as they often were, than was necessary to meet the interest of the debt, the surplus was paid into the sinking fund, however much it might be needed for the general administrative expenses of the country. The bondholders benefited, but the administration was starved. Sir Edgar Vincent had shown much ability, tact, and determination in bringing the finances into order and insisting on economy. But though by means of the sinking fund the body of the debt had been diminished by a million, there was still an unpayable deficit on the administrative budget. Immediate improvement in the financial situation had been rendered hopeless by the insurrection, the claims arising from the riots in Alexandria, and the difficulties in the Soudan. It was so plain that the deficit could only be extinguished by some change in the law of liquidation (which could not be modified without the consent of the great Powers), that Lord Granville assembled a conference in London to attempt a solution of the difficulty.

The conference was rendered abortive by the unwillingness of France to allow of any diminution of the interest paid to bondholders.

But it had not been wholly useless. Plans had been suggested which might be used as basis of future negotiations. Meanwhile, as the conference had settled nothing, Lord Northbrook was sent to Egypt as High Commissioner to see whether anything could be done on the spot. He advised the Egyptian Government to take a strong step, and to order the taxes to be paid direct into the Exchequer instead of into the Caisse, an evident violation of the existing regulations. Indeed, acting on behalf of their Governments, the Consuls-General of all the great Powers, with the exception of Italy, protested in no measured terms against the action of the Egyptian Government. The Caisse went further, and obtained a legal judgment against it. But meanwhile the broken negotiations had been resumed. The impossibility that Egypt should under the existing arrangements continue its course of improvement was demonstrated, and, with much expenditure of diplomacy and much timely concession, the English Government at length succeeded in securing a general consensus among the Powers, which was thrown into the form of the Convention of London. By this arrangement Egypt was allowed to raise upon the joint guarantee of all the Powers a loan of £9,000,000, at a low rate of interest; while for the future the surplus of the funds of the Caisse, after paying the interest of the loans, was to be employed first in defraying any deficit in the administrative budget caused by duly authorised expenditure. If there was still a surplus, one half went to the Caisse, the other half the administration was free to spend. The Convention gave the required relief. The loan was raised without the slightest difficulty. It enabled the Egyptian Government to pay the Alexandria compensations and all the outstanding deficits, and left in hand £1,000,000 to be spent on the one most pressing need, the restoration of the system of irrigation.

Conference on
Egyptian
finance, 1885.

With limits restricted to territory which it was within its power to defend, with finances which now that the Convention had secured a breathing time were sufficient for its needs, Egypt was henceforward to advance rapidly towards prosperity under the masterly leading of Major Evelyn Baring, subsequently Lord Cromer. The period of vacillation seemed to have reached its conclusion. Some of the magnificent hopes which had been formed in the earlier days of the occupation were laid aside, and a firm hand directed to complete a sufficient if more restricted programme of reform.

Lord Cromer's
successful
work.

The foreign policy of the Government had thus been attended with

a fair measure of success in Europe, and in spite of grievous blunders and disasters had left Egypt in a more hopeful position than that country had ever yet attained. It had produced peace; it had maintained and employed successfully the European concert. Even when breaking with it and acting upon its own initiative, England had been allowed without any overt opposition to follow its own course.

The conduct of the Government with respect to South Africa was of a different character, and produced far less satisfactory results. When in opposition, Mr. Gladstone and his friends had raised their voices loudly against the annexation of the Transvaal, and had spoken with severity of Sir Bartle Frere's policy. Yet upon their accession to office no change was made. Apparently the attempt to confederate the South African States was to be continued, and the Transvaal to be ruled as an integral portion of the Empire. The explanation offered seemed sound. It was pointed out that there was the greatest difference in matters of foreign and colonial government between approval and reversal of policy; a new Administration has to make the best of the political legacy it receives from its predecessors; that a reversal of policy should follow every change of Ministry would introduce an uncertainty into the national relations which could scarcely fail to be disastrous. But while thus continuing to declare that the authority of the Crown must be maintained, the Government were reconsidering the situation, and gradually arriving at the conclusion that the annexation, carried out as it was believed at the time with the consent of the majority of the inhabitants, had, in fact, been the result of false information. Although the inhabitants of the towns had welcomed the security which annexation would give them, the Boer farmers, who constituted the real strength of the country, were vehemently opposed to any limitation of their independence. In spite of the repeated assertions of the officials that the new government was accepted and the taxes willingly paid, the strength of the disaffection was brought home in no doubtful manner when, on December 16, 1880, a general insurrection broke out, and the Boers proceeded to re-establish their old form of government.

According to the Ministerial explanations, Mr. Gladstone was convinced that a backward step was necessary; that justice required the acknowledgment of the mistake under which the annexation had been carried out; and that the attempt to uphold it and to suppress the insurrection by arms would probably precipitate a general war of races,

Gladstone's
policy in South
Africa.

Question of
annexation of
Transvaal.

not only in the Transvaal, but throughout the Colony. He believed that a peaceable solution might be arrived at, at once honourable to England and satisfactory to the Boers. To reach this desirable end, the good offices of Mr. Brand, the able and honourable President of the Orange Free State, were accepted. On the 27th of January, Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner, informed him that, "if avowed opposition ceased forthwith, her Majesty's Government would endeavour to frame such a scheme as they believed would satisfy all enlightened friends of the Transvaal." Meanwhile, military operations were not suspended. On the 24th of January, Sir George Colley advanced against the Transvaal with an army of only 1000 men. On the 28th he was repulsed in an attack upon the insurgent position of Laing's Nek. On the 7th of February, while attempting to open communications with Newcastle, he was attacked on the Ingogo river, and withdrew with difficulty. Having received no answer to an offer he had sent to the Boers, he hastily attempted to turn Laing's Nek by occupying Majuba Hill. He was there attacked by the Boers, himself killed, and his detachment annihilated.

Majuba Hill,
Feb. 27, 1881.

Immediately following these disasters, an armistice was made between Sir Evelyn Wood, the new commander, and Joubert, the Boer general. The armistice was prolonged, and in March a conference was held, at which Kruger, Pretorius, and Brand were all present, and terms of peace were arrived at.

The Ministry, when charged by the Opposition with yielding ignominiously to the victorious arms of the Boers, declared that negotiations had been already set on foot before the late disasters. It does not seem clear why, if negotiation was possible and imminent, warlike measures should have been taken. Several English garrisons were indeed besieged, and their relief may have been thought necessary to establish the prestige of England during the negotiations. The ignominious failure of the attempt to relieve them, followed immediately by the armistice and peace, was certainly disastrous. Appearances lent themselves to the belief that the Ministerial views of justice were influenced by the failure, and that England had been placed in a humiliating position.

The terms of agreement were afterwards formulated in a Convention, and ratified by the Transvaal Volksraad, October 25, 1881. Every effort was made to save the dignity of England and to give the negotiations the air of a friendly examination into the sources of discontent conducted by a superior Power. A Royal Commission, consisting of Sir Hercules Robinson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and

Convention of
Oct. 1881.

Sir Henry de Villiers, holding its sittings at Pretoria, was appointed to consider all the circumstances of the case. Nor was it without compensation that freedom was again granted to the Boers. The fruitful source of previous disorder had been the unlimited power of expansion which the Boers had possessed; it was this which had brought them so constantly into collision with the native tribes; and the chief cause of the deeply marked separation between them and the English was the entirely different view taken as to the treatment of the natives. In the Convention, which was the outcome of the Royal Commission, a well-defined boundary was established, leaving in English hands the line of communication between Cape Town and the interior, and at the same time preventing further expansion over the Bechuanas to the west. It was clearly understood that the Bechuanas were under English protection. The fair treatment of the natives was to be secured by the presence in Pretoria of an English Resident, specially charged to guard their interests as well as to supervise the foreign relations of the Republic. With these restrictions, and under the fully expressed suzerainty of the British Crown, the Boers were allowed complete self-government. In this case, as in Ireland, the unfortunate coincidence of armed and violent disaffection deprived of all its grace an act of national justice, and left behind it, in the place of gratitude, the formidable lesson that an English Ministry could be made to yield by sufficient pressure.

The lesson was not lost upon the Boers. Victorious as they believed in arms, they yet found themselves in the grasp of a superior Power, which limited their action in some of their most vital interests. It was soon evident that they were unwilling to submit to the restrictions laid upon them. Agitation for modifications of the Convention speedily showed itself. The discovery of gold, and the consequent influx of European immigrants, began to work changes in the character of the people. A wealthier, and not too scrupulous, element was introduced. To the love of individual freedom and impatience of restraint which characterised the Boer farmer, was added the ambition of the adventurous and speculative townsman and miner. There began to be talk of obtaining again the complete freedom secured by the obsolete Sand River Convention of 1852. Causes of quarrel began to multiply. To clear the way for the railroad from Pretoria to Delagoa Bay which was to afford a commercial opening to the sea, it was necessary to destroy the power of the native tribes occupying the north-east of the Transvaal. After many defeats, the Boers succeeded in overcoming their determined

Unrest of
the Boers,
1882.

opposition; the chiefs were brought to trial as rebels, and one of them suffered the punishment of death. Another measure which could scarcely commend itself to English views followed; the greater portion of the conquered tribes were reduced to semi-slavery as indentured apprentices. The action of the Boers on the western frontier gave an even more direct and dangerous sign of their intention to override the Convention. The territorial limits of the Transvaal on that side had been carefully drawn, and the Bechuana tribes had been acknowledged to be under the protection of England. But the Boers succeeded in forming an alliance with certain of the chiefs, while some 500 of them, who could be regarded as little else than freebooters, obtained settlements beyond the limit fixed by the Convention. The great line of internal communication was thus threatened, and a Boer Protectorate within the English Protectorate established.

At the English Colonial Office was Lord Derby. His whole career had been marked by a somewhat extreme anxiety to avoid the risk of war; and he now so far listened to the representations of the Boers as to appoint a Commissioner to examine into the working of the Convention, and to report on the modifications required. The duty of the High Commissioner was however forestalled, and before he left England the Colonial Office was informed that his visit was useless, for the Volksraad had already determined that the time for remodelling the Convention had arrived, and requested leave to send three Commissioners to England for the purpose of stating the demands of the Transvaal Government. Consent was given, and President Kruger, Secretary Dutort, and Mr. Smit, arriving in the autumn of 1883, were able before the close of the year, after numerous conferences with Lord Derby, to set out on their home journey with the conviction that they had been successful.

Early in 1884 the Colonial Minister embodied his views in a new Convention, and laid them before Parliament. It appeared that, for the sake of securing a peaceful solution of the question of the Bechuana frontier, Lord Derby was ready to make great concessions. The Convention was in almost every point favourable to the wishes of the discontented Boer leaders. The western limit, with some slight alteration in favour of the Transvaal, was indeed firmly insisted upon. But, on the other hand, the position of England as the sovereign or suzerain power seemed almost to disappear. The Resident was withdrawn; a representative of less importance and with only consular powers took his place, while in not one of the amended clauses was the suzerainty of the Crown

Lord Derby's
policy.

The Convention
of Feb. 27,
1884.

asserted. The sole mark of superiority retained was the right of veto on foreign treaties, which still remained in imperial hands. Although Lord Derby treated it as a matter of no importance, it is impossible in the light of subsequent events to avoid the conclusion that the omission of some reassertion of the suzerainty was a grave error. Technically the new Convention consisted of amendments of certain clauses containing the conditions of the grant of self-government under British suzerainty which had been made in 1881; the grant itself remained unchanged. But it is impossible to deny that the omission of all reference to the supremacy of England gave rise to the very natural view that the Convention of 1884 was substituted in its entirety for that which preceded it.

It was not without difficulty that the western frontier of the Transvaal was settled and cleared. The native tribes had employed Europeans in their wars. The Transvaal had been used as a basis of operations, and the land was rapidly falling into European hands; the intruders had established two independent governments known as Goshen and Stellaland. To clear them out it was necessary to send Sir Charles Warren with British troops. Without bloodshed, but at considerable cost, the filibusters were got rid of, and in the autumn of 1885 Bechuanaland was formed into a Crown colony.

The problems which the Government was called upon to solve in South Africa were not confined to the relations between Great Britain and the Transvaal; a plentiful crop was to be found even in the settled Colonies. By no means the least of these was the attitude of the Dutch element of the population in Cape Colony, a direct consequence of the late complications in the Transvaal. It could not be expected that the inhabitants of Dutch extraction would watch without sympathy the comparative success of the attempt made by their fellow-countrymen beyond the Vaal to secure greater independence. The division between the races, which had been gradually dying out, was again accentuated; and, chiefly by the exertions of Mr. Hofmeyer, a member of the Cape Government, the *Africander Bond* was called into existence for the purpose of securing to the Dutch a preponderating influence in the administration of the Colony. Disloyalty to England was not as yet contemplated, but the movement threatened to introduce a dangerous element of discord. Again, the people of Natal, for the most part of British origin, had begun to feel aggrieved at the distinctions drawn between them and the inhabitants of Cape Colony. They regarded themselves as equally well fitted for the privilege of self-government,

**Difficulties in
Cape Colony
and Natal.**

and resented the inferior position which they occupied as a Crown colony. A vehement agitation was set on foot to secure constitutional advantages. The problem was left unsettled at the close of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry. The desire of Natal for self-government had been strengthened by the disregard shown to the Colonial wishes in the treatment of Cetchwayo, who had been left a prisoner in the hands of the English at the close of the Zulu War in 1879. He had been restored to his dominions in spite of the strongly expressed remonstrance of the Colony. The restoration produced tribal disturbances, and gave occasion for interference on the part of the Boers, always eager to extend their power towards the east and to secure an outlet for themselves upon the sea. It became necessary gradually to extend British rule northward from Natal along the whole coast until the borders of Portuguese territory were reached.

It was indeed becoming obvious that events had rendered the old view, held by the Liberals with regard to colonial affairs, impossible. It is somewhat difficult to trace a ^{Colonial responsibilities.} consistent line in the colonial policy of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry, but there would appear to have been at the bottom of it a desire to be free from colonial complications, and to leave the Colonies to shift for themselves when once endowed with constitutional institutions. If the idea of thus eluding the responsibilities of empire existed, events were on all sides tending to secure its disappointment. More and more home intervention was being demanded, fresh responsibilities were constantly being assumed. In South Africa, while upon the east in Zululand an increase of territory under the immediate superintendence of imperial authority had been found necessary, Bechuanaland upon the west had been withdrawn from the authority of the Cape and placed under the protection of the Colonial Office. The Colony had also proved unable to suppress an insurrection in Basutoland, caused by an imprudent attempt to disarm the natives, and there, too, it had been found necessary to transfer the country to the Colonial Office. Even in Australia the moderating hand of the central Government had been required to check the ambitious views of the local Government. The people of Queensland had thrown covetous eyes upon the island of New Guinea, regardless both of the well-being of the natives and of the claims of other countries. It was only by imperial intervention, exercised at the risk of a dangerous quarrel with the Colony, that the annexation was prevented. The entrance of other European countries, more especially Germany, upon the field of colonial expansion, and the establishment and definition of the

at the end of February, was very simple. By the Act of 1832, the franchise in boroughs had been given to the occupiers of houses of £10 clear annual value. By the Acts of 1867 and 1869 it had been extended to all occupiers of rated dwelling-houses who actually inhabited them. It was not proposed very largely to interfere with these limits. The £10 franchise was henceforward to apply to *land*, whether there were buildings on it or not; and a new franchise, intended to include those who though in all respects fitted for the enjoyment of the franchise were prevented by their occupations from living in houses of their own, was to be established. The name of "Service franchise" sufficiently indicates its character. To these franchises as established in boroughs, the county franchises, to which previous legislation had fixed higher limits, were to be now exactly assimilated. The Bill was to apply not only to England but to Scotland and Ireland. Its result would be an addition of about two million to the three million electors already existing in the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister allowed at once that so vast a change must require the redistribution of seats, and this immediately. Yet he determined to introduce the two measures separately, to proceed first with the enfranchising Bill and to pass, only after its completion, to the question of redistribution. The wisdom of such an arrangement was of course doubtful; but Mr. Gladstone at once took high ground, and attempted to give his Bill a character of broad constitutional meaning which might raise it above the level of ordinary party contest. He based his advocacy upon no grounds of class or party, but upon the great principle that in width of representation lay the strength of the constitution, and that it was a good thing in itself that as large a body as possible of fitting voters should enjoy the franchise. With regard to their fitness, he held that the countryman, though he might be less sharp than his compatriot in the town, was likely to be a man of greater self-dependence and of more practised judgment because so much in his daily life was left to himself and his hand had to be ready for so many various occupations. Redistribution, which Mr. Gladstone evidently regarded as chiefly important in its relation to parties, he said, might well be postponed. The principle of the Franchise Bill he declared to be quite simple, and to be of such importance that as little opening as possible should be given, by the introduction of side issues, for those minor differences of opinion by which Bills are so often wrecked.

This view befitted a great statesman; yet it was exactly on this point, the separation of the two parts of the measure, that the

The Franchise
Bill introduced,
Feb. 1884.

Conservatives based their opposition. Thoroughly disliking the Bill, they yet felt it impossible to resist what was but the natural outcome of principles already accepted. They saw however, as Mr. Gladstone had feared that they would, infinite opportunities of throwing obstacles in the way of its completion if they could obscure its simple outlines with the details of party issues. And as far as party tactics were concerned, the destruction of the Bill was of great importance. The Parliament was drawing towards its natural end, and the Opposition believed, or at all events affected to believe, that, if the Franchise Bill alone was allowed to pass, Government would at once dissolve, so that the new Parliament might be elected by the enlarged constituencies unmodified by redistribution. They believed, moreover, that the Government was severely shaken by the disasters of its foreign policy; they were therefore eager to find some means of defeating it speedily and forcing a dissolution, so that the general election might be held with the existing limited constituencies. The anomalies of the franchise were so obvious that they had little hope of resisting the Bill by itself. It is true that some members even of the Liberal party, such for instance as Mr. Goschen, were bold and independent enough to state the strong objection they felt to placing political power in the hands of a constituency so ignorant as they believed the rural population to be. It is true also that a still larger number of men on both sides of the House questioned the propriety of extending the new franchises to Ireland; they feared that the increase of voters would diminish the proportionate strength of the loyal minority, and that its effect would only be that which they before all else deprecated, an increase of the power already wielded by Mr. Parnell. But on neither of these points, nor on the form in which the Bill was presented to the House,

**Persistence
of the Govern-
ment.**

would the Government give way. Mr. Gladstone opposed every assault upon its essential principle; and Mr. Trevelyan, the Irish Secretary, who had had much to do with drafting it, did not hesitate to say that its extension to Ireland was so integral a part of it that he would instantly leave any Ministry who thought of applying it only to England and Scotland. The discrepancies visible in the views of the Opposition with respect to redistribution seemed in themselves to justify the course the Government had taken in separating the two measures.

The Franchise Bill was too important to escape a lengthened discussion, but as it gradually worked its way through its various stages, the feeling constantly became stronger that its principle was

unassailable. The sole hope of successful opposition to it lay in the demand for immediate redistribution; and, in the face of the assured Government majority in the House of Commons, it was felt that the destruction of the Bill on this ground must be relegated to the House of Lords. It was soon known that the Peers would have no objection to undertake the task laid upon them by the Opposition. Early in May a meeting of Conservative Peers was held, followed by an article in the *Standard*, the accepted organ of the party, which announced that if the Bill reached the Upper House it would be met by a resolution which would, if carried, be tantamount to a rejection of the Bill itself. A disagreement between the Houses, recalling the great crisis of the Reform Bill of 1832, was imminent. The utterances of Lord Salisbury during the Whitsuntide recess seemed to destroy all hope that the collision could be avoided. "Unless the measure for Redistribution went hand-in-hand," he said, "with the measure for Representation he would strongly recommend the Lords to throw out the present Bill." It was thus with a full recognition of the approach of a dangerous quarrel that Mr. Gladstone in June moved the third reading of the Bill. He spoke in language which was thought by some to be unduly threatening. While looking forward with grave apprehension to a collision between the Houses, he declared his own conscience clear, and threw the responsibility entirely upon his opponents. His words produced some protests in favour of the rights of the Upper House, but without much delay the third reading passed in June *nemine contradicente*, the Conservatives having left the House well assured of the futility of opposition and certain that their objects could be secured elsewhere.

The position of the Conservatives in the Upper House was not without its difficulties. The question at issue was one in which the interests of the Lower House were far more deeply implicated than those of their own. And though there could be no question as to their constitutional right to throw out the Bill, any interference on their part in a question of representation was certainly open to objection. Moreover, it could scarcely be denied that the narrow ground on which they rested their opposition gave their action the appearance of a party move. It was in avowed fear, from a party point of view, of a general election with the enlarged constituency that they had determined to force on a dissolution. The House of Lords could scarcely avoid the imputation of allowing itself to be used as a party instrument by the Conservative

The Franchise
Bill in the
Commons.

The Franchise
Bill in the
Lords.

leaders. Such objections and difficulties however had no effect on Lord Salisbury. In vain did Mr. Gladstone reject with scorn the theory that under any circumstances the Peers could have a right to dictate the moment for dissolution. In vain were moderate voices raised, warning the Peers of the dangers of the line of conduct on which they were entering. The Opposition leader and his friends were firm in their determination; and, as had been foretold, immediately on the introduction of the Bill it was met by an amendment moved by Lord Cairns, declaring that while the House was willing to concur in a complete scheme for the extension of the franchise, it could not consent to support the second reading of the Bill, "unless accompanied by an adequate assurance that the measure would not come into operation except as an entire scheme." Backed by the great Tory majority always at his command in the Upper House, Lord Salisbury upheld the amendment in a speech full of bitter sarcasm. The division showed that the House had freed itself of all scruples. The amendment was carried by a very large majority.

It was at once understood that this vote, although it did not formally reject the Bill, was fatal to its further progress. Mr. Gladstone thereupon stated his intention to get through the necessary work as quickly as possible, and to call an autumn session in which the Bill, unaltered, would be reintroduced. But though assuming this firm position, there is no doubt that he was eagerly desirous to avoid an internecine contest between the Houses. More than once he pointed out the risk of grave constitutional difficulties if the Peers, by their opposition to the will of the constituencies, forced upon the country the question of the reform of the House of Lords. More than once he emphasised the possibility of the junction of the two questions, the reform of the representation and the reform of the House of Lords, becoming a source of serious danger. He had indeed ever since the second reading of the Bill, carried on informal negotiations with the Opposition leaders, with a view of arriving at some compromise and of discovering what they would regard as an "adequate security." These negotiations produced much misunderstanding and much useless vituperation; but they at least proved that on the part of the Liberal leaders there was a real inclination to arrive at some form of compromise. The feeling that a direct quarrel between the Houses should be avoided was so strong with a considerable section of both parties, that Lord Wemyss introduced an amendment embodying such a compromise. Finally however on the advice of Lord Salisbury it was rejected, and an amendment of Lord Cadogan

**Necessity for
autumn
session.**

declaring in set form "that the two Bills should be presented together in the autumn," was carried. The Franchise Bill thus disappeared.

The session was shortly brought to an end, and England rang with loud declamations in support of one side or other of the great dispute. There was a perfect rage for public meetings. The Liberals claimed to have held no less than 1277 in England, and 235 in Scotland. The number of those who attended them was roughly calculated at 4,000,000. It was considered that the will of the people was clearly demonstrated by these overwhelming figures, contrasted as they were with the poor tale of 180 meetings and an audience of 300,000, of which the opponents of the Bill could boast.

Public excitement on the Franchise question.

Parliament again met in October for an autumn session. A few words were said in the Queen's Speech about the condition of Egypt and of the Transvaal; but the only Bill mentioned was the Franchise Bill, which was to

Autumn session, Oct. 1884.

be at once reintroduced. It was in fact brought in on the second night of the session. In spite of the flood of argument with which the country had been deluged, the spirit of compromise, so constantly visible in English affairs, had been gradually spreading. In the short discussion which attended the reintroduction of the Bill this was abundantly proved, the Government going so far as to confess that they recognised the propriety of the demand that some knowledge should be afforded to the country of the character and scope of their proposed Redistribution Bill. This was accompanied by a pledge that it should be immediately introduced. The Franchise Bill was carried quickly through all its stages, and read a third time in the House of Commons without division. Its reintroduction in the Upper House was attended by an intimation that certain concessions could be made. What these were was explained by Lord Granville the day before the second reading (November 17). Party spirit aside, there was indeed abundant room for compromise. The

Spirit of compromise.

Government, honestly intent upon the broad issues of the controversy, desired to make sure of the passing of the Bill for the extension of the Franchise. If that was certain, they were not unwilling to discuss the Redistribution Bill, and to approach it in a spirit fair to both parties. On the other hand, the Opposition, to whom the Bill was no doubt originally distasteful, had found themselves unable to withstand it. They had accepted its principle, but had fallen back upon the partisan view of the question, and simulating extreme mistrust of the Government intentions had confined themselves to the demand for redistribution.

But this was after all little more than a trick of party warfare. The Lords had made a great demonstration of their constitutional powers, but had no wish to submit to the risk of reform. Already they had rejected a motion of Lord Rosebery's in favour of a voluntary reform of their House, and had certainly no mind to enter into a struggle with the Commons which might have forced reform upon them against their will. If the one party therefore was ready to give a pledge that the Franchise Bill should pass, the other was willing to promise and even to give security that a Redistribution Bill should immediately follow it. It was upon these lines that the compromise was effected.

Negotiations were opened between the party leaders, and, as the
The Redistri- outcome of various conferences and compromises, a
bution Bill. Redistribution Bill was produced. The Bill thus concocted contained two disfranchising schedules, in one of which were included all boroughs with a population of less than 15,000; in the other, towns with a population of less than 50,000 which were henceforward to send to Parliament one member only. There were a few special exceptions; but the effect of the whole was the extinction of 160 seats. The peculiarity of the Bill was the method in which these were redistributed. There had been as usual much discussion, more especially as to the best method of representing minorities; but the more popular view was to discard all complications, and to introduce what was spoken of as the "One member system," which consisted in the breaking up of cities, boroughs, and counties alike, into electoral areas, each area returning a single member. There was much difference of opinion among both parties upon this point. Mr. Gladstone had himself declared when he introduced the Franchise Bill that he was inclined to the maintenance of the existing divisions, by which he believed the representation of a great diversity of interests would be best secured. Such also was naturally the view of many of the older Conservatives. But the more moderate sections of both parties had now to count upon newly arisen influences.

It was not in the Liberal party alone that divisions of opinion were
The Fourth seen. Lord Randolph Churchill, at the head of a
Party. small band of followers, recognised as the Fourth party, had declared his independence of the old Tory leaders, and had assumed the somewhat anomalous attitude of a Tory Democrat. To him, as to the Radicals, the "one member system" recommended itself. His influence was sufficient to convert Lord Salisbury to the same view; and the chief point of the settlement arrived at between

the parties consisted in the acceptance of this scheme. A few exceptions to it were allowed, such as the city of London, and some towns of between 50,000 and 165,000 inhabitants. In these cases more than one member would still be permissible. There was also a slight addition made to the number of seats in England and in Scotland. In Ireland and in Wales the number remained unchanged. On the 5th of December this Bill was read a second time, and passed without division; and, according to agreement, the Lords on the same day took into consideration the Franchise Bill, and passed it without alteration.

**Franchise Bill
passes the
Lords.**

A vast constitutional change, comparable in its importance to the great Reform Bill, was thus ultimately effected by general consent, after having threatened for awhile to produce a most formidable dislocation in the quiet working of the constitution. But this peaceful consummation had unfortunately been postponed long enough to allow of that very extension of the point at issue which Mr. Gladstone had regarded as so full of danger. The action of the Peers had forced upon the public mind grave doubts as to the constitutional value of the Upper House. It had become a commonplace with the orators of the Radical party to stigmatise the House of Lords as a mere party instrument in the hands of the Tories. Its unrepresentative character, and the obvious legislative incapacity of many of its members laid it particularly open to attacks of this description. The partial truth contained in the charge, and the recognition of the inherent weakness of the Upper House as an institution in a Democracy, had induced Lord Rosebery to bring in a motion recommending the Lords to carry out a reform of their House from within. He had found but little support, and his motion had completely failed. But his action gave strength to the general feeling, and the reform or abolition of the Upper House became from this time a part of the advanced Liberal creed.

**Question as to
the value of the
Upper House.**

Scarcely had the two Bills connected with the representation of the people been passed, when the series of events occurred which somewhat unexpectedly led to the fall of the Ministry. During the whole of Mr. Gladstone's tenure of office since 1880 the Government had encountered difficulty after difficulty. At the end of 1884 it seemed as if they had weathered the storm. In the teeth of bitter opposition, they had at all events produced a more tolerable state of affairs in Ireland under the able guidance of Lord Spencer, and had carried considerable remedial measures. In Afghanistan they had succeeded in establishing a native

**Difficulties of
the Govern-
ment.**

Government which promised to be lasting. With perhaps an excess of honesty they had restored the independence of the Transvaal Boers under the lightest of limitations, and secured for the time peace in South Africa. At home they had carried to a successful issue their great attempt at the improvement of the representation. And, although they had found themselves obliged to break the European concert, and although England thus stood much alone in its foreign relations, their action in Egypt was apparently successful. After much vacillation and perhaps unnecessary delay, the army was now in full career towards Khartoum to rescue Gordon and to complete that concentration of the Egyptian power within narrower limits which the advance of the Mahdi had seemed to render necessary.

Yet, at this very moment, any credit which the Government might have claimed was swept away by the terrible news that the work of the army had been entirely wasted, that it had arrived too late, that General Gordon had fallen, and that Khartoum was in the hands of the Mahdi. It has been already said that every step taken by the Ministry in their management of Egyptian affairs had been followed with jealous eyes and pitiless criticism. The strictures of the Opposition seemed now thoroughly justified. The charges of vacillation, procrastination, and inefficiency seemed to need no further proof.

The Ministry was deeply discredited when it met Parliament after the Christmas recess; and that Lord Rosebery should have consented to take office, as Lord Privy Seal (January 1885), in so unpopular a Cabinet was certainly an act of chivalry. The opportunity for attack was too obvious to be neglected by the Opposition. Immediately after the opening of Parliament Sir Stafford Northcote moved a vote of censure. The words of his motion were in themselves weak and ineffective enough.

They contained no direct censure upon the past policy, and were limited to the declaration that the Government must be called upon to take immediate measures in accordance with its responsibilities. But for some time previously the Government had been straining every nerve to carry on an expensive and difficult war, and now in the face of the late disasters seemed heartily in agreement with the popular cry that Khartoum must be retaken and the Mahdi's power destroyed. It certainly appeared ill-timed to call upon them to recognise their responsibilities. But the words served well enough to cover an attack upon what was the great crime of the Administration in the view of the Conservatives, that it had refused to establish a Protectorate in Egypt,

**News of the
fall of Khar-
toum, Jan.
1885.**

**Sir S. North-
cote's vote of
censure.**

and had always avowed its intention of withdrawing as soon as possible from the country, and that even now it seemed likely that, the blow once struck, the Soudan would be evacuated without delay. The words of the vote of censure afforded, too, quite sufficient cover for the angry feeling everywhere prevalent that Gordon had been deserted and that the Government were answerable for his death. It was not easy to make a defence against such charges. It was impossible to deny that indecision had caused the delay which had proved so fatal. There seemed a touch of littleness in stating that Gordon had desired to act singlehanded and to carry out the evacuation of the Soudan without the assistance of English troops. Nor was it possible to deny that, however peaceful their intentions may have been, the action of the Government had, as a matter of fact, plunged the country into an expensive and dangerous war. Nor could they clear themselves by promises for the future. They had to rely upon Sir W. Harcourt's declaration, that to pledge themselves to any line of future conduct which must of necessity depend upon unknown circumstances was impossible, and that one thing only was definitely certain, that under no circumstances would they break their engagement to render secure the government and dominions of the Egyptian Khedive.

The vote of censure moved by Lord Salisbury in the Upper House was, as might be expected, of a much more trenchant character. "This House," he declared, "is of opinion that the deplorable failure of the Soudan expedition to attain its object has been due to the undecided counsels of Government and to the culpable delay attending its operations." Then, passing to the future, he went on to assert that, "the policy of abandoning the Soudan after the conclusion of military operations would be dangerous to Egypt and inconsistent with the interests of the empire." Here, too, the defence bore an unavoidable appearance of weakness. But Lord Granville was probably not far from the truth when he treated the angry language of the Opposition as a mere ebullition of party feeling, and declared his belief that Lord Salisbury, if in office, would follow the same line of policy as his predecessors. The result of the vote of censure was a foregone conclusion; it was negatived in the Commons by the narrow majority of 14, and in the Lords it was carried by the triumphant majority of more than 120.

It was certain that the Government had sustained a severe blow, and there was much talk of a Ministerial crisis; but it was finally decided to pay no attention to the censure of the Upper House. It was nevertheless generally understood that the dissolution, which could

Salisbury's
vote of
censure.

not in any case be far distant, would be hurried on, and that only a few of the more important and necessary Bills be proceeded with. But events which took place in Central Asia, known as the Pendjeh incident, interrupted this quiet process of Parliamentary death, and for a moment brought the nation within measurable distance of war.

**Bad news from
Afghanistan,
March 1885.**

The occupation of Merv by the Russians had brought them into actual contact with the Afghans. To keep Afghanistan clear of Russian influence was the object of both the English parties, whether as a Protectorate or a friendly independent Power. Arrangements had been made for the delimitation of the frontier, and Sir Peter Lumsden, with a large staff and escort, had been despatched as Commissioner to meet the representatives of Russia on the spot. Difficulties had at once arisen. The Russian Commissioner had not made his appearance. The exact direction of the line to be marked out had not been clearly defined. The Afghans had meanwhile occupied a position which the Russians considered threatening, and in February news reached England that the Russians were advancing, and that the danger of collision was so great that, much to the anger of our Afghan ally, Sir Peter Lumsden had withdrawn into safer quarters. It can scarcely be wrong to connect the advancing attitude of Russia with the fall of Khartoum. The occupation of the British army in Egypt, and the loss of prestige which had accompanied the death of Gordon, afforded an opportunity not likely to be neglected by the energetic commander who was subjugating Central Asia. The hope that the explanations from St. Petersburg might prove satisfactory and avert war faded when news arrived that on the 30th of March the Russians had attacked and defeated the Afghan army, and had occupied the district known as Pendjeh, to the south of what was understood to be the proposed line of frontier.

It was a moment of extreme danger. The warlike temper of the nation was aroused by what seemed to be a wanton breach of faith on the part of Russia. Already in March, to support the previous negotiations, orders had been issued to mobilise two army corps in India. Even the calling out of the Militia and the Reserves had been in contemplation. It was now (April 21) thought necessary to turn aside the troops which were to have been employed in the Soudan, to commission and charter ships to strengthen the navy, and finally to demand a vote of credit for £11,000,000, which could scarcely be wanted except for some important war. The speech in which Mr. Gladstone introduced his

**Preparations
for war with
Russia,
April 21.**

demand for the vote of credit gave clear evidence of his own view of the Russian conduct, and of his determination to resist it. It was received in the House with unbounded enthusiasm. But at heart devoted to peace, and with followers much divided in opinion, his warlike utterances were not followed by corresponding action. Means were found to bring the questions at issue to arbitration, and the incident passed off peacefully. Commissioners without so much warlike apparatus as had attended Sir Peter Lumsden were again sent to the frontier, and with no further friction the work of marking out the frontier line was resumed. The Russians however continued to hold the district they had occupied, and the Government thus again laid themselves open to the constantly repeated charge of their enemies that they had deserted their allies and surrendered territory which they should have held. The debates which arose on this incident had one good result. It became evident that, in spite of party recriminations, there was no real difference of opinion on the policy to be adopted upon the Indian frontier. It was acknowledged on all sides that to strengthen the existing frontier of India was a matter of necessity; that it was desirable to complete the railway to Quetta, and to hold that station with British forces; while with respect to Afghanistan itself all idea of occupation was dropped; it was henceforward an accepted policy of both parties to support a strong and independent Government friendly to Great Britain and open to its unquestioned influence.

But it was not in its external difficulties or in the assaults of its overt enemies that the greatest danger of the Government lay. The divisions within the party were the real source of its weakness. The prospect of a general election with a vastly enlarged constituency, of which the political views were an unknown quantity, but whose support it was necessary to secure, brought these divisions into still stronger prominence. It was again the Irish question which supplied the chief grounds of difference. It had become necessary to reconsider the policy to be adopted in that country. The Crimes Act was running out, the desire for land was unappeased, the cry for Home Rule was hourly becoming stronger. The administration of Lord Spencer had been eminently successful; his opinion was naturally of great weight. While freely recognising the improved condition of the country, he considered that there were certain parts of the Crimes Act which should under all circumstances be continued, as affording a necessary means for the discovery and prevention of

**Divisions in
the Liberal
party.**

**Difference of
opinion as to
Ireland.**

crime. The older and more moderate members of the party agreed with him, and the introduction of a Coercion Bill of some sort was resolved upon. The more advanced Liberals looked with extreme dislike upon any form of exceptional legislation, and considered that a large measure to facilitate land purchase, which should enable the tenants by means of capital advanced by England to become freeholders, was the true method of continuing the pacification of the country; but many Liberals, and at their head was Mr. Chamberlain, while desiring to the full the extension of the freeholding class, thought the better method of arriving at that object, and of giving satisfaction to the Irish, lay in political reform, and were in favour of some large measure of local government. It was in this direction also that Mr. Parnell and his friends were inclined to move; it was an open secret that they would give their support to whichever party opposed exceptional legislation. Attempted pacification by means of a Land Purchase Bill was distasteful to them. Their object was exclusively political; it was Home Rule they were seeking. Once possessed of political power, of local self-government of a popular character, they felt sure of being able to mould the Land Laws according to their own wishes.

The variations in the several lists of measures which Mr. Gladstone put forward as those with which he intended to proceed gave evidence of the rise and fall of the influence of the partisans of these three views. In the first list the Coercion Bill occupied a prominent place. But before long an Irish Land Purchase Bill made its appearance among the necessary work of the Session. Instead of healing the party breach, this concession only widened it; for the older members of the party, such as Lord Selborne, had grave objections to any measure of the kind. It seemed however as though a compromise had been arrived at when, after Whitsuntide, Mr. Gladstone, in sketching the course of business, made no mention either of a Local Government Bill or of a Land Bill. It was at all events evident that there were such grave points of difference between the various sections of Liberals that the ability of the Premier would be taxed to the full to keep the party together. A way of escape from these difficulties unexpectedly presented itself.

The expenditure rendered necessary by the Soudan War, the war-like preparations, and the great vote of credit seriously hampered the finances. It fell to Mr. Childers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to find some means of meeting the deficit, which had reached the sum of £15,000,000. He

**The Budget
introduced,
June.**

produced a carefully constructed and well-balanced Budget. He suggested the suspension of the Sinking Fund for the repayment of the National Debt for two years. Half the required sum would thus be supplied. With respect to the other half, regarding it as a fixed principle that the new charges should be divided equally between direct and indirect taxation, he proposed, on the one hand, to raise the income-tax from 5*d.* to 7*d.*, and to equalise the death duties on personal and real property, while, on the other hand, he intended to increase the taxes on beer and spirits. The Budget, although it appears to have been a very reasonable one, encountered opposition on all sides. Both propertied and unpropertied classes considered their interests unduly touched; while the Conservatives saw with dismay a sacrilegious hand laid upon the sacred privileges of real property, the advanced Liberals held that the increase of indirect taxation bore too heavily upon the poorer classes, especially as wine, the drink of the wealthy, was not included in the taxable articles. Lastly, the Irish found a national grievance in the addition to the spirit duty, regarding it as an assault upon one of their chief manufactures.

The result was that the Budget on its second reading was thrown out, and an amendment moved by Sir M. Hicks-Beach condemning both branches of the Budget proposition was carried by a majority of 12. In the division the Parnellites had unanimously sided with the Opposition. But the real cause of the failure of the Government seems to have been the large abstention of the Liberals; no less than 76 were absent, many of whom had not paired. It is not improbable that the disordered ranks of the Ministerialists, in deep perplexity as to their Irish policy, were not sorry to find a less compromising means of retiring from office in a finance question of no very vital importance. Mr. Gladstone, to whom the refusal to grant the necessary taxes after a vote of credit had been given seemed an unconstitutional proceeding, had early declared that the acceptance of the Budget was a matter of life and death to the Government. He refused to reconsider his position, and the Ministry at once resigned (June 12, 1885).

**The Budget
rejected and
the Ministry
resign.**

CHAPTER II.

LORD SALISBURY'S MINISTRY, June 24, 1885, to Feb. 1, 1886.

<i>Premier and Foreign Secretary,</i>	Lord Salisbury.
<i>First Lord of the Treasury,</i>	Lord Iddesleigh.
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer,</i>	Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>	Lord Halsbury.
<i>President of the Council,</i>	Lord Cranbrook.
<i>Lord Privy Seal,</i>	Lord Harrowby.
<i>Home Secretary,</i>	Sir R. A. Cross.
<i>Colonial Secretary,</i>	Colonel Stanley.
<i>War Secretary,</i>	Mr. W. H. Smith.
" "	Lord Cranbrook (January 1886).
<i>Indian Secretary,</i>	Lord Randolph Churchill
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty,</i>	Lord George Hamilton.
<i>President of the Board of Trade,</i>	Mr. Stanhope.
<i>Postmaster-General,</i>	Lord John Manners.
<i>Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster,</i>	Mr. Chaplin.*
<i>President of Local Government Board,</i>	Mr. Arthur Balfour.*

IRELAND.

<i>Lord Lieutenant,</i>	Lord Carnarvon.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>	Lord Ashbourne.
<i>Chief Secretary,</i>	Sir W. Hart Dyke.*
" "	Mr. W. H. Smith (December 1885).

* Not in the Cabinet.

THERE was some delay in the appointment of the new Ministry. It was plain that whoever might be called to office would have to confine himself to bringing the Session to a close, that he would be liable at any moment to be outvoted by the Opposition, which on ordinary topics was largely in the majority, and that the real struggle between the parties must take place at the approaching general election with a new constituency, a new register, and a new distribution of seats. Although Mr. Gladstone would not pledge himself to any distinct course of action, he said enough to induce the Queen, after some days' delay, to express to Lord Salisbury her belief that he might safely trust to the assurances of forbearance on the part of the Opposition which she had received from Mr. Gladstone, and might accept office. The remarkable point in the construction of the new Cabinet was the victory won by Lord Randolph Churchill and the fourth party of Tory Democrats. Sir Stafford Northcote, as First Lord of the Treasury, but without the Premiership, passed to the Upper House as the Earl of Iddesleigh,

The new
Ministry, June
24, 1885.

Lord Salisbury undertook the duties of the Foreign Office, Lord Randolph Churchill became Secretary of State for India, and the management of the House was placed in the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. It was not till July, after the re-elections consequent on the change of Ministry had been completed, that the new Ministers were fully installed in office, and August was not far advanced when the Session was brought to an end.

In the few intervening weeks there had not been much opportunity for the Government to exhibit their policy. In foreign affairs, Lord Salisbury frankly took over the work of his predecessors, and pursued it with marked success on the same lines. No doubt the mere change of Government enabled him to act more vigorously, but it was generally admitted that he used this advantage with great skill, and succeeded in bringing the various harassing ques-
Successful foreign policy.
tions to a satisfactory conclusion. Negotiating directly with the Russian Ministry, he closed the vexed question in Afghanistan, leaving to the Frontier Commission only the duty of marking out what had been already settled. He found means to remove the objections of the Sultan to our position in Egypt, and, aided by some good fortune in the death of the Mahdi, he found himself able to withdraw from the Soudan and continue the friendly occupation of Egypt.

As regards Ireland it was determined, contrary to the lately expressed views of Lord Spencer, to attempt to keep order by means of the ordinary law; there was to be no new Coercion Bill. As a still further step towards conciliation, Lord Ashbourne, the Lord Chancellor for Ireland, introduced a Bill to facilitate the purchase of land by occupying tenants. It was an enlargement of the land-purchase clauses of Mr. Gladstone's Bill of 1881. Instead of three-fourths of the purchase-money, henceforward the whole would be advanced, subject to a retention in the hands of the Commissioners of one-fifth until that fifth had been repaid. In spite of the objections raised to the socialistic character of the Bill, and of the danger which, as was pointed out, lay in the State becoming the virtual landlord, the Bill passed both Houses without much difficulty, and a grant of £5,000,000 was made to the Land Commissioners to carry out its provisions. A measure for the housing of the poor in England, which encountered some opposition on the same grounds, was also carried.

The Ashbourne Act, July 1885.

There were still further indications that the Conservatives were inclined to enter into some sort of alliance with their old enemies, the Irish party. The efforts of Mr. Parnell to obtain a revision of the

judgments in the case of the Maamtrasna murders were supported by Lord Randolph Churchill, and received the approbation of Lord Carnarvon. This attempt to destroy the character of the Irish judiciary, and of the late Lord Lieutenant's government, was not made without severe comments from the Conservative side, and not without much blame from the Press of both parties. Whether an actual compact had been arrived at or not, it seemed as though the Irish party was likely to receive substantial consideration for its late action in combining with the Conservatives to destroy Mr. Gladstone's Ministry. It was at least evident that its vote at the coming election could not be without great importance, and would be sedulously sought.

The dissolution in August brought to a close in a somewhat unexpected manner the important Parliament of 1880, and opened the way to what promised to be a party contest of unusual severity.

The Liberal party had been swept into office by the great wave of reaction which had accompanied Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speeches in 1880. Never had it appeared so powerful, never were its prospects more promising.

Yet the five years of Mr. Gladstone's second administration must take their place in the history of English politics as the period during which the disintegration of the Liberal party was consummated. It is true that the actual point of dissolution is to be found a few months later, at the general election of 1886; but all the forces which brought about that dissolution of the great Liberal party were already in active working. Though the Government had failed to fulfil the great hopes which had attended their entrance upon office, the break-up of the party did not depend only or chiefly upon their administrative failure. Beset from the first by unforeseen and serious difficulties connected especially with Ireland and with Egypt, the Government had succeeded, tardily no doubt, and with not a little show of weakness, in placing the foreign affairs of the country in so fairly prosperous an attitude that their successors found little difficulty in bringing the questions which were at issue to a successful termination. The administration of Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan in Ireland, aided by some stringent legislation, had been so far satisfactory that the country, at all events for the moment, seemed tolerably quiet. Domestic legislation had been marked by an achievement of no small significance, by a great step in the democratic reorganisation of the constitution. Though there was much to criticise in all this, there was nothing to discredit, nothing which could foreshadow the eclipse which the party was shortly to

**Alliance
between Irish
and Conser-
vatives.**

**Review of
Gladstone's ad-
ministration.**

suffer. Other causes of a more subtle character were at work, some inherent in the very nature of a Liberal party, some the product of several new and important ideas which were forcing their way into notice as political factors.

Every Liberal Government is at a distinct disadvantage as compared with their opponents. Their methods cannot fail to be more difficult and less striking. They are constantly hampered by their own conscientious scruples. To be at once strong and sympathetic is a very difficult matter. To appreciate the feelings and to recognise the rights of the governed, while forcing upon them measures which, however beneficent or necessary, clash with deep-rooted feelings and with rights which, if not real, are at least believed in with profound faith, must always be a matter of extreme difficulty. In the same way, in the foreign relations of the country, to limit the national desire for expansion to what is reasonably within the power of the nation to enjoy with profit, or to what it may honestly demand from its neighbours, without exhibiting weakness or damaging the national self-respect, is a matter requiring far greater courage and patience than to accept and reiterate the bold assertions of a people which regards itself as the natural master of the world, and considers the maintenance of its prestige as its greatest duty. A still greater disadvantage in the political contest is the want of discipline which is implied in the very name of Liberal party. Reform has many sides; resistance to reform has but one. It can only be on certain great lines and at certain great crises that the individuals who constitute a Liberal party can be brought to think and act in unison. There must constantly be greater differences of opinion between various sections of the Liberal party than between that party and its declared opponents.

The last five years were unusually fitted to produce this dislocation of opinion. Quite irrespective of the particular questions which had made the late Parliament so constantly a scene of warm party conflict, certain far-reaching ideas not essentially connected with party, and lying deeper than the surface questions of the day, had made their appearance. The imperial idea so carefully fostered by Lord Beaconsfield, although the reaction from it had been the moving cause of the fall of the Conservative Government, had taken deep root in the minds of men of all parties. Even while repudiating it, and while again and again tracing to its introduction by their predecessors the difficulties they had to encounter, the Liberal Government had been driven, at all events in part, practically to accept it. They had indeed with somewhat overstrained scrupulousness separated

Causes of weakness in the Liberal party.

Special disadvantages in these five years.

the Transvaal from the body of the empire, but they had been compelled in more than one portion of South Africa to assert the imperial rights. In Egypt the course of events had been too strong for them; they had found it impossible to confine themselves to a secondary position or to a short temporary occupation, and had been compelled to assume an attitude scarcely to be distinguished from an armed Protectorate. They had found it necessary to overrule the Government of Queensland in its hurried attempt to annex New Guinea, and the central Government had been driven to recognise the danger of colonies not only practically independent, but without common interests with the rest of the empire. The irresistible demand for larger outlay on the fleet and the coaling stations had forced the world-wide distribution of the British dominions into prominence, and although the practical difficulties in the way of any scheme of federated empire gave a somewhat unreal aspect to the movement, the many important names which graced the Federation League proved how deeply rooted the idea was. Those who were affected by it, and those to whom it was odious, were gradually forming parties, subsequently known as the "Great" and the "Little" Englishers. There is even less difficulty in recognising the growing desire on the part of the Radicals to reform or even to get rid of the House of Lords; while, on the other hand, there is foreshadowed the persistent determination on the part of Lord Salisbury to win back for that branch of the Constitution of which he was a member something of its old position, and to restore something of that influence which had been allowed to dwindle, but which undoubtedly the forms of the Constitution might still secure to the Upper House.

Still more important than these ideas was the wave of Socialism, which in many various forms swept over the country and left strong marks of its work behind. The political conscience, which had been roused as long ago as the old Reform Bill, had now become highly sensitive on social questions. The frightful differences in the distribution of wealth, and the absence among large classes of the community of those advantages which are the very essence of civilisation, such as cleanliness, sanitation, and comfortable homes, had aroused the attention of men of all parties. The theories of Henry George with respect to the nationalisation of land had found many partisans. The separation of the working-class from the soil began to be regarded as a crying evil. The systematic doctrines of the political economist, and the system of *laissez faire* which seemed to result from them, had received a severe shock. Men began to contemplate

without a qualm legislation which interfered with all the strictest rules of the old *doctrinaire* economists; and Conservatives, to whom property and the sanctity of contract might be supposed to be very dear, did not shrink from advocating measures closely akin to State Socialism. It was indeed the peculiarity of the movement that it affected both parties. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the increased power thrown by the late Reform Bill into the hands of the working-classes had something to do with the readiness with which these ideas spread. However that may be, they were largely accepted as a part of the political creed of a considerable section both of one party and of the other. With Mr. Chamberlain social reform was to become before long the chief battle-cry at the general election. It was Lord Randolph Churchill, as the head of the Tory Democrats, who influenced the formation of the new Government and supplanted the older leaders.

It might have been expected that these various elements of discord would have acted with disintegrating force on the one side as well as on the other. Such however was not the case. The Conservative party showed a remarkable aptitude for accommodating itself to prevalent opinion. It has probably always gathered rather round persons than principles. It has constantly exhibited a spirit of partisanship in the truest sense of the word. It thus on the present occasion, without in any way losing its hostility to its Liberal opponents, absorbed much of the popular feeling which would naturally have led to Liberalism, but without breaking up its close party ties. The new Toryism, having won Lord Salisbury to its interests, was able to rid itself of those leaders who represented the older opinions of the party, and to continue its party warfare under younger men of the new school. It was not so with the Liberals. The leaven of the old aristocratic Whigism was too strong to be removed. There lay behind the party a triumphant tradition of success won on orthodox economic lines, with which the bulk of the party declined to break. From this there resulted a somewhat strange state of things; the great body of the Liberal party was to the full as Conservative as the Conservatives themselves. While the Tories clothed themselves in Liberalism, the veteran Liberals found no difficulty in assuming Conservative views. Thus, when a real political point came to be decided, when the mere personal struggle which is so characteristic of the history of the Parliament of 1880 was changed to a fight in which a great principle was at stake, there was no difficulty in the fusion of the whole of one party with a large portion of the other, and the deserted remnant sank into a hopeless minority. The

**Its effect on the
state of parties.**

constantly increasing similarity in the views of the two parties, except on one or two points, of necessity went far to change the character of the criticism to which the Government was exposed. Attention was directed chiefly to efficiency of administration. It was not the object aimed at, but the way in which it was sought, which formed the difference between the parties. But though the sources of the change are found in the Parliament of 1880, it was not without a violent shock that they were brought to a practical completion.

For some time before the close of the session the din of the approaching contest had been loud. The immense increase which the late Acts had given to the constituency rendered the coming election one of unusual importance. The vote of the newly enfranchised labourers might well decide the contest, and in which way it would be cast was a mere matter of speculation. As the Irish would probably vote in pursuit of their own objects regardless of English politics, it seemed possible that they would hold the balance in their hands, unless an overwhelming majority could be secured either by the Liberals or by the Conservatives. To conciliate the Irish or to secure such a majority was absolutely necessary for the success of either party. These two necessities determined the lines on which the election was fought. Social legislation, especially with regard to land, and the various degrees in which concessions might be made to the desires of Ireland, were the prominent points at issue. It appeared as if on the first of these points the Liberal party would at once break up.

The Radicals had found a leader of great ability and indomitable energy in Mr. Chamberlain. In his public utterances and those of the old leaders of the party, such as Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, there seemed scarcely anything in common. In a speech at Hull the Radical leader laid down as the first point of any Liberal programme that an attempt should be made to destroy the crying evil of the time, the inequality in the distribution of wealth. As steps towards this, he recommended that education should be free, that the income-tax should be raised upon a graduated scale falling more heavily upon the wealthier classes, while with respect to land he declared his willingness to apply to England those more advanced laws the introduction of which in Ireland had met with such violent opposition. He desired that fair rents should be fixed by an impartial tribunal, that every tenant should have the right to sell his goodwill as in every other trade; and, beyond this, that the labourer should be made more independent by a widespread creation

of allotments or small holdings, to be procured by the compulsory purchase of land. To carry out this scheme, he upheld the necessity of establishing strong elective local authorities to whom the compulsory power should be intrusted. With respect to Ireland, a process of the same sort, the establishment of representative local authorities, should be pursued.

Nothing could stand out in stronger contrast to this programme than the views of Mr. Forster and Lord Hartington. It was natural that Mr. Forster's observations should be directed towards Ireland, and that he should take the opportunity of declaring his firm belief in the necessity of continued coercion and his strong objection to any relaxation of the Crimes Act, which he said meant the repetition, unpunished, of all those outrages and of that system of boycotting of which he had himself had so bitter an experience. To Lord Hartington, equally naturally, it was the land question which seemed the most important. While desiring a free interchange of land and the destruction of any laws which trammelled it, he admitted frankly that he did not believe "in the efficacy or advisability of any proposition for forcibly or arbitrarily redistributing the land of this country." He clung to the old economic principles accepted by the Liberals. He stood in defence of the rights of property. With respect to Ireland, he declared himself the uncompromising opponent of Mr. Parnell, who had shortly before asserted that the only work of the National party in the new Parliament would be the restoration of legislative independence to Ireland. Such legislative independence Lord Hartington declared impossible.

With views so entirely dissimilar as those held by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington and their respective followers, it seemed doubtful whether the Liberal party would be able to formulate any sort of official programme with which to go to the constituencies. Early in the contest, Lord Rosebery, eager to keep the party together, had made use of an expression which became a by-word. He said that while one claimed to be a Radical, and another a Whig, and he himself was satisfied with the name of Liberal, there was room for them all under the shadow of Mr. Gladstone's umbrella. It remained to be seen how far the manifesto of the ex-Premier, which was somewhat long delayed, would answer the purpose of affording shelter to his various and divergent followers.

It was probably inevitable that a document issued for the express purpose of forming a neutral platform on which men of very different

Views of Mr.
Forster and
Lord Hart-
ington.

Lord Rose-
bery's views.

views could take their stand should be somewhat vague and unsatisfactory. One question at least was set at rest—the great statesman had no idea of withdrawing from the political arena. He declared

Mr. Gladstone's himself definitely pledged to continue to lead the party.
manifesto.

It seems strange that at the very head of the list of the objects which the Liberal party should seek he should have placed reform of Parliamentary procedure. It is impossible to doubt that he was already contemplating the completion in some form or other of his work for Ireland; and, just as he called for a majority so large as to free him from all restraint from the Irish party, so he demanded such a change of procedure as should rescue him from its obstructive methods. Before all, he wanted the stage clear for any legislation he might think it necessary to introduce. He could no longer put up with what he himself described as the congestion of business, the suspension of useful legislation, and the power of the minority to check the will of the majority. Apart from this point he committed himself to very little. He declared himself uncertain on the subject of local government, and looked for the relief of the working-classes chiefly to a change in taxation, by which the balance between real and personal property should be rectified, and the pressure on the rates be diminished by the handing over of certain definite taxes to the administration of the local authorities. On the Land Laws, his opinion appeared to coincide with that of his older colleagues, whom he evidently shrunk from alienating. He said that, though the House of Lords ought to be reformed, the principle of birth should be respected. On the question of the disestablishment of the Church, he was content to say that it had not yet been brought within the sphere of practical politics. As to free education, he reserved his opinion. When he came to Ireland, he carefully avoided laying down any line of action, and confined himself to words which, while they asserted the necessity of maintaining the unity of the empire, left room for a hope on the part of the Irish that he would under certain circumstances go a long way with them. "The limit," he declared, "is clear within which any desires of Ireland constitutionally ascertained may, and beyond which they cannot, receive the assent of Parliament. To maintain the supremacy of the Crown, the unity of the empire, and all the authority of Parliament necessary for the conservation of this unity, is the first duty of every representative of the people. Subject to this growing principle, every grant to portions of the country of enlarged powers for the management of their own affairs is not a source of danger, but a means of averting it, and is

in the nature of a new guarantee of increased cohesion, happiness, and strength."

Vague as it was, it seemed as though the manifesto would have the desired effect. Mr. Goschen, whose opinions were still more Conservative than those of Lord Hartington, construed it to mean that Mr. Gladstone accepted the Liberal programme as understood by Lord Hartington. Mr. Chamberlain, boldly maintaining his position, and continuing to demand free education and popular representative local government for the purpose of carrying out social reforms, especially with regard to land, accepted the manifesto as a whole. "It was wide enough," he said, in one of his speeches, "to allow of the attainment of immediate reforms and to prepare for further measures." He however at the same time acknowledged the difficulty of his position, and the possibility that he might be obliged to separate himself from the Cabinet.

The Tory manifesto issued by Lord Salisbury seemed in many ways to accept as the objects of the party much the same things as those desired by the Liberals. The difference lay in the spirit in which they were approached, and in the method in which they were handled. The cheap and easy transfer of real property and the sale of glebes were to satisfy the rising popular demand for land. Though some form of local government might be given to Ireland, the first point was the integrity of the empire. But the real essence of the manifesto, the real bid which it contained for the popular vote of the new constituencies, was to be found in Lord Salisbury's treatment of questions connected with the Church. Emphasising the danger of the destruction of denominational education, and of a desire for disestablishment which had been expressed by many of the Radicals, he raised what was in fact the old cry of "The Church in danger," and made it plain that as far as it depended on him the battle was to be fought principally on this old-fashioned ground. Meanwhile Mr. Parnell, in his turn, expressed a limited acceptance of the Liberal programme, but demanded that Mr. Gladstone should state more definitely what he would give to Ireland; in other words, he indirectly declared himself open to a bid.

Under these circumstances, Mr. Gladstone went in November to Midlothian, with the intention of delivering three great speeches. Their success was very different from his former addresses in the same neighbourhood in 1880. He accepted the battle-ground chosen by his adversaries, and devoted

**The Tory
manifesto.**

Parnell's demands.

**Gladstone's
Midlothian
speeches,
Nov. 1885.**

his attention chiefly to the discussion of Church disestablishment, the topic which Lord Salisbury's manifesto had brought to the front. From a party point of view, his treatment of the subject was not happy. He separated the cases of England and Scotland, and recognised that the condition of their own Church was a question chiefly for the Scottish people. He did not therefore treat the disestablishment of the Scotch Church as beyond the sphere of practical politics, but he refused to put himself at the head of the movement. This half-hearted and grudging declaration chilled the warmth of many of his warmest adherents, who were largely drawn from the ranks of the Free Church. But the result of his reply to Mr. Parnell was of a much more damaging character. He treated with scorn the unauthorised demand that he should declare a definite policy. "That must," he said, "at least wait till Ireland had spoken by the voice of its representatives." Upon this, Mr. Parnell, finding what he had regarded as friendly overtures thus rebuffed, turned savagely upon the Liberal party, and issued a sort of proclamation, ordering his followers to vote against the Liberals, "who had coerced Ireland, and deluged Egypt with blood," and who now, shelving for the time all real Liberal policy, were demanding nothing but a majority for the sole purpose of freeing themselves from the Irish party, and new rules of procedure for the purpose of suppressing it in the House.

The elections shortly followed (December 1885), with results scarcely expected, and fraught with momentous consequences. Mr. Parnell had not overrated the strength of his position. Eighty-five Parnellites, pledged to follow him, and not one single Liberal, were returned from Ireland. It was plain that nothing but an overwhelming majority either of Liberals or of Conservatives could prevent this band of enthusiasts, with one object in view, from holding the balance in Parliament. But the elections in England did not produce any such majority. In the boroughs it would seem that the shortcomings of the Liberal foreign policy, and a dread of what were then regarded as the excesses of the extreme Liberal leaders, coupled with the action of the Irish, produced an unexpected victory for the Conservatives. On the other hand, the newly enfranchised county constituencies showed their gratitude by returning a large majority for the Liberals. When the elections were completed, it was seen that, so far from producing the desired commanding majority, the Liberals on the one side, and the Conservatives with the Parnellites on the other, were exactly equal in number.

All hope of returning to power with a free hand was lost; and Mr. Gladstone, with his considerable majority in England, Scotland, and Wales, had to ask himself by what means it might be possible to relax a position which threatened to be a deadlock. At all events, he could no longer feel that he was not sufficiently informed as to the desire of Ireland; the country had given, by the proper constitutional method, a very distinct answer. It was obvious that Ireland, and Ireland alone, must occupy the attention of the House, and that the great questions of domestic policy on which the elections had been largely fought must be laid aside.

Irish affairs at once became the chief topic of all public speeches. Both parties appeared to contemplate the necessity of satisfying in some way or other, and in some degree, the demands of Mr. Parnell and his followers. Very various plans were put forward, and very various limitations on the power of any new Irish authority suggested. There appeared to be no very clear or systematic view on either one side or the other. But these various opinions were at length brought to something like a focus by the unauthorised publication of what purported to be Mr. Gladstone's view upon the subject. Although its want of authorisation was declared, and although indeed it was scarcely consistent with Mr. Gladstone's position to frame any definite plan while out of office, the unauthorised programme bears so close a resemblance to the scheme he subsequently produced, that there can be little doubt that it expressed the opinion at that time occupying his mind; and as such it was generally received. It was little short of a complete Home Rule scheme. Subject always to the necessity of the maintenance of the unity of the empire, the authority of the Crown, and the supremacy of Parliament, a new Irish Parliament was to be created to which the entire management of legislative and administrative business for Ireland was to be intrusted. The imperial charges were to be equitably divided, and security given for the efficient representation of minorities.

The premature publication of this scheme was the occasion of the great breach of the Liberal party. As it appeared to contemplate the establishment of an independent Irish Parliament, at the same time that it in words secured the supremacy of the imperial Parliament, it at once raised the question whether the two were compatible; and all those who were eager in pressing on the public their various shades of concession, but with whom the support of imperial supremacy was a first condition, began to draw together in

Ireland holds
the balance.

The unauthorised
Home
Rule scheme.

Breach in the
Liberal party.

their hostility to the suggested plan. Those who, like Mr. Childers, desired a relation to be established such as that existing between the States and the Central Government in America, or those who, like Mr. Trevelyan, considered that the maintenance of imperial authority over the police was a matter of absolute necessity, or those who, like Mr. Chamberlain, believed that social changes placed in the hands of elected local councils was the truest form of conciliation, found this point at least in common, that their plans afforded far stronger securities for union than could be found in any form of independent Parliament. The unauthorised programme however had at least this effect, that it seemed to offer much more to the Irish party than they could hope for from their late allies, the Tories. It was understood that any alliance (if there had been an alliance) was dissolved, and that consequently Lord Salisbury would find himself confronted by a hostile majority of overwhelming strength. He determined however at all events to meet Parliament before resigning.

When the Houses met, on January 21, 1886, for the despatch of business, the most important topic in the Queen's Speech was naturally the condition of Ireland. The Queen was made to complain of the renewal of the attempt to excite the people of Ireland to hostility against legislative union. "I am resolutely opposed," she was made to say, "to any disturbance of that fundamental law." It was further indicated that boycotting and concerted resistance to the enforcement of legal obligations would have to be met by some special legislation. The policy of Government was thus plainly declared. The attempt to rule by ordinary law was pronounced a failure, and the time-honoured methods of coercion were to be employed; there was no indication of how far or in what respects the almost unanimous demand of the Irish representatives was to be met. As leader of the Opposition, Mr. Gladstone rose after the Address had been moved, repeated the passage in his manifesto which expressed within certain limits his belief in the advantage and possibility of some form of Home Rule, and declared that he awaited the exposition of the policy of the Government, hoping that the question might be raised above the fight of parties, and promising his support to any offer he considered adequate. He entirely refused to explain his own views, on the fair constitutional ground that the responsibility for any scheme must rest with those in power.

But it was not upon the grave question which occupied all minds that the Ministry was to be driven from office. The Queen's Speech had shown that the coalition between the Tories and the Parnellites

Queen's
Speech, Jan.
21, 1886.

was dissolved; Mr. Gladstone's utterances made it plain that much more could be expected from him than from the Government; the Opposition was for the present sure of the Irish vote. An amendment on a side question, moved by Mr. Jesse Collins, and expressing the wishes of the Chamberlain section of the Radicals with respect to the redistribution of land, afforded the first opportunity of placing the Government in a minority.

The re-establishment of the labourer on the soil, by means of allotments and small holdings provided by the compulsory purchase of land by the local authorities, had formed one point in what was known during the elections as the unauthorised Radical programme; and it had been accentuated by certain resolutions of the Small Holdings Association, lately passed in London. Although Mr. Collins' motion, as an amendment on the Address, could assume Jesse Collins' amendment. no form but that of an abstract resolution, regretting that no definite measures for the relief of the labourer were mentioned in the Queen's Speech, it was regarded as an expression of the Radical views. As a matter of party management, the opportunity it offered of putting the Government in a minority upon a popular measure, rather than upon the vexed question of coercion in Ireland, was too good to be refused. Mr. Gladstone at once took Mr. Collins' suggestion, and raised it to the dignity of a definite part of the Liberal policy. Although the idea of a compulsory sale of land brought out in some degree the cleavage already existing in the Liberal party, and although Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen strongly opposed it, the vigorous support of Mr. Chamberlain and his Radical followers, and the solid vote of the Irish members, ensured its success. The Government was defeated by a majority of 79. Of this majority, 74 were Irish, and Lord Salisbury might, perhaps, have disregarded the vote had not the break-up of the Liberal party appeared imminent, promising to bring with it a speedy return of the Conservatives to office. Mr. Gladstone had indeed refused to give any indication of his Irish policy; but his well-known opinions, and the support he had received from the Irish members, encouraged the belief that he would propose methods of conciliation too far-reaching to be generally adopted Resignation of Lord Salisbury, Feb. 1, 1886. by his party. Under these circumstances the Government at once accepted their defeat, and resigned office.

CHAPTER III.

MR. GLADSTONE'S MINISTRY, Feb. 1, 1886, to July 20.

<i>First Lord of the Treasury,</i>	Mr. Gladstone.
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer,</i>	Sir William Harcourt.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>	Lord Herschell.
<i>President of the Council,</i>	Lord Spencer.
<i>Home Secretary,</i>	Mr. Childers.
<i>Colonial Secretary,</i>	Lord Granville.
<i>Foreign Secretary,</i>	Lord Rosebery.
<i>War Secretary,</i>	Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.
<i>Indian Secretary,</i>	Lord Kimberley.
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty,</i>	Lord Ripon.
<i>President of the Board of Trade,</i>	Mr. Mundella.
<i>Postmaster-General,</i>	Lord Wolverton.*
<i>Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster,</i>	Mr. Heneage.*
<i>President of Local Government Board,</i>	Mr. Chamberlain.
" " " "	Mr. Stansfield (March 26).

IRELAND.

<i>Lord Lieutenant,</i>	Lord Aberdeen.*
<i>Chief Secretary,</i>	Mr. John Morley.

SCOTLAND.

<i>Chief Secretary,</i>	Sir George Trevelyan.
" "	Lord Dalhousie (March 26) *

* Not in the Cab.net.

THE accession of Mr. Gladstone to the Ministry secured sooner or later the authorised publication of his Home Rule scheme. Meanwhile the immediate appointment of Mr. John Morley to the office of Secretary for Ireland gave a clear indication of what that scheme would be; for, amid the clash of rival schemes, Mr. Morley was the one man who had clearly spoken in favour of an Irish Parliament. He had indeed declared that the separation of the kingdom would be a national disgrace, but had sketched a scheme for a legislative body so distinctly and exclusively national that the Irish representatives would be excluded from the imperial Parliament.

So clear an indication of policy raised great difficulties in the way of the formation of a Ministry, and went far to complete the threatened break-up of the Liberal party. At once that section which agreed with Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen declined office. For the instant the effort to

**Gladstone's
difficulties in
forming a
Ministry.**

retain the services of Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan was successful; an assurance that the work was to be one of examination and inquiry was found sufficient to induce them to join the Ministry, but it was plain that their adhesion was of the slightest. It was indeed a misfortune that Mr. Gladstone had not taken more entirely into his confidence those who had hitherto worked with him. Though the general character of the new policy on which he intended to embark had been explained to them, he had sought but little assistance in drawing up the elaborate and detailed plan laid before Parliament.

It is natural to suppose that to Mr. Gladstone the opportunity seemed at length to have arrived for putting the finishing stroke to his great structure of Irish policy. Nor was he influenced alone by his sympathy for the misgoverned country, or by his hearty dislike of the coercion which had been forced upon him. He spoke of himself in one of his speeches under the title of "an old Parliamentary hand." The words were of course used against him, and twisted to mean that he was by long practice a consummate party politician and nothing more. But they were words full of deep significance. A life of unusual length devoted to public service in Parliament had had a great effect upon his mind. He was saturated with the more dignified traditions of his earlier days, and eagerly desirous to see the House of Commons resume the active and beneficent position which he rightly or wrongly attributed to it. He could not forgive the Irish party for its coarse obstructive policy, by which, as he conceived, they had not only prevented much useful legislation, but permanently degraded the character of the House. His desire, and he had expressed it, was for such a great predominance of one of the English parties as should enable the House to handle the vexed question of Ireland unhampered. In this he had been bitterly disappointed; and, failing it, he appears to have thought to place the question above party politics. He certainly made more or less definite overtures to his political opponents, and the words which he had used in replying to the Address showed that he still maintained some hope that the spirit of compromise which had saved other critical situations might again be shown. To him the voice of the Irish nation had spoken in the late elections, and he awaited some plan from the Government which while satisfying the aspirations of the Irish might justify the support of himself and his party. The threatened renewal of coercion proved the vanity of this hope. His accession to office transferred to him the duty of satisfying the Irish demands, and, warned by the protests from both the extreme sections of his followers, called forth on one

Why Gladstone acted alone.

ground or another by the mere shapeless indication of his plan in the unauthorised scheme, he may well have felt that it was upon himself alone that he could rely. Trusting to his own commanding influence and unrivalled abilities, he determined to produce a scheme which should stand upon its own merits; and in formulating it he sought the assistance only of those whom he knew to be like minded. But, however grand this self-reliance may have been, it was not calculated to conciliate a divided party, or to enable him to form a Ministry from the full strength of the Liberals.

**Desertion of
the old
Liberals.**

Although the new Ministry was not otherwise than a strong one, and though it gained something by the appointment of Lord Rosebery to the Foreign Office, it was more remarkable for the absence than for the presence of prominent statesmen. Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, Lord Selborne, Lord Derby, Lord Northbrook, and Mr. Forster, were all alike absent from it. And it was almost certain that, as soon as the attitude of inquiry began to pass into action, the names of Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Chamberlain would be added to the list of absentees. And in fact on the very day after the introduction of the Irish Government Bill Mr. Chamberlain explained the reasons which compelled him to leave the Cabinet. The name of another old supporter of the Liberal party was missing from the list. Mr. Bright no longer stood side by side with his old comrade and leader. Gifted by nature with all the requisites of the orator, a fine and sympathetic voice and the command of a language singularly simple in its masculine vigour, he had long occupied the position of the popular tribune. His eloquence and sturdy Radicalism had been a chief factor in the success of many a hard-fought Liberal victory. But his Radicalism was of the old-fashioned type; the freedom of the individual was its ideal. The free man working out his own success by means of his own unfettered industry and ability was the type of citizen he desired to produce. Of Quaker origin, and thus naturally drawn towards a peaceful solution of all difficulties, war was to him the greatest of evils. Neither the new doctrines of State interference nor the phantom glories of imperialism had any attraction for him. Great Britain, strong in her own freedom, freedom economical and political, sending out into the world colonies to teach and to enjoy the same free principles, was the national greatness to which he aspired. The inheritance of the policy of their predecessors, the undoubted growth among both parties of the desire for further expansions, had led the Liberal Ministry to pursue a line of conduct of which it was impossible that Mr. Bright could

approve. It was impossible that a man, who in his earlier life had gone so far as publicly to advocate retirement from India, should for the avowed object of securing an easy access to our Eastern empire countenance warlike measures directed against what bore all the appearance of a national movement. The order for the bombardment of Alexandria was fatal to any further connection between him and the Government. He had at once resigned. Nor was Mr. Gladstone's subsequent policy more to his taste. Much as he had sympathised with the demands of Ireland, much as he had contributed to the establishment of peasant proprietorship there, the Land Bill of 1886 appeared to him so destructive of the common laws of justice and of free contract, that it encountered his strongest opposition. "Little Englander," as he would no doubt be called at the present time, he yet felt strongly the absolute necessity of the union of the three kingdoms, and regarded with extreme distrust and dislike any attempt to establish a second Parliament within their limits. When the idea of Home Rule assumed a practical shape, he became one of its strongest opponents. The separation from Mr. Gladstone was no doubt a cause of pain; he could not, he said, "bear to attack his old friend and leader." It was a cause of kindly regret; "If," he wrote in answer to a remonstrance from Mr. Gladstone on the severity of his language, "If I have said a word which seems harsh or unfriendly, I will ask you to forgive it." But neither pain nor friendship availed. The political breach was too wide to be bridged. It was as a firm, nay active upholder of the Unionist policy that Mr. Bright passed the short remainder of his life which closed in 1889.

It was not for some time, during which several pieces of not unimportant legislation were completed, that the question which was occupying the minds of all men was brought forward for solution. On the 8th of April Mr. Gladstone asked leave to bring in his Irish Government Bill, and proceeded to unfold his intentions. The Bill was to be immediately followed by a Land Bill, and Mr. Gladstone was careful to explain that the two formed in fact one indissoluble scheme separated only for convenience.

**Home Rule
Bill brought in,
April 8, 1886.**

The Irish Government Bill, as explained by Mr. Gladstone, was, in accordance with his well-known dislike to abstract resolutions, an elaborate and detailed piece of work. Apart from details which as the scheme never came into existence are of little importance, its chief provisions were these: An Irish Parliament sitting in Dublin was to legislate for Ireland and to control the executive. Irish Peers and

representatives were no longer to have seats in the imperial Legislature. Questions concerning the Crown, the army and navy, and foreign and colonial relations, were withdrawn from its purview. The constabulary was, after a period of two years, to pass under its control. With the exception of so much of the customs and excise as was necessary to meet its liabilities to England, the taxation was also placed in its hands. Its share of the imperial burdens was settled at one-fourteenth instead of two-seventeenths as had been arranged at the Union. Securities were given for the safety of the Protestant minority; and the religious difficulty was met by an enactment forbidding the establishment or endowment of any religious denomination. The political side of the proposed arrangement was contained in this Bill. But there was no hesitation in acknowledging that the social questions to be solved were at least as difficult as the political.

It was in order to meet these social difficulties that the twin measure, **The Land Bill,** the Land Bill, was to be immediately introduced. It **April 16.** was a gigantic system of purchase. Mr. Gladstone held that his legislation hitherto had been all in favour of the tenant and peasant, and that in the new departure now made it was the proprietor's turn to be considered. Machinery was to be established by which landowners could sell their property to a certain State authority at twenty years' purchase, to be retailed subsequently to small purchasers. The first cost to the English ratepayer was calculated to be not less than £120,000,000, which was to be raised by the issue of new stock.

Bills of such vast proportions, and implying so far-reaching and fundamental a change, could not be thus thrown down in the midst of a Parliament not yet educated to receive them without exciting extreme astonishment and strong and bitter opposition. Not only the Bills themselves, but the conduct of the Minister who had with such reticence formulated them, became at once the object of violent attacks. It is scarcely worth while to mention the suggestions of ambition and self-seeking which were freely imputed; Mr. Gladstone's character and aspirations were too high to allow such suggestions to be seriously considered for a moment. Silence also is the best way of treating such language as men of ill-disciplined minds and flippant tongues, like Lord Randolph Churchill, allowed themselves to use. It cannot injure the fame of a great Minister, attempting though it may be without success to grapple with a question of a difficulty almost insoluble, to stigmatise his plan as the offspring of "verbosity and senility," or as "the foolish work"

**Bitter opposi-
tion to both
Bills.**

of "an old man in a hurry." Nor are the charges otherwise than futile which were brought against the completeness of the suggested change of policy, or against the political morality of a man who, having never hitherto shrunk from the employment of coercion when he considered it necessary, now appeared as the champion of the party he had hitherto repressed. Mr. Gladstone had been compelled to work as best he could the constitution as it then existed. He had witnessed the failure of his own efforts, and the efforts of his rivals, to preserve law and order without such coercive measures as no wise man could contemplate with equanimity. He had seen the failure of those coercive measures themselves, and had come to the conclusion that it was not the administration but the constitution itself which required alteration.

But quite apart from these useless or ungrounded charges, there was very much in the Bill open to most reasonable objection.

The maintenance of the unity of the empire, and of the supremacy of the imperial Parliament, was a principle firmly fixed in the minds of Englishmen. There was no party that did not hold it, there was no responsible statesman but had thought it necessary in the last few months to declare his adhesion to it. One question which immediately arose was whether the arrangements of the Bill were compatible with that principle. Unfortunately, led away probably by his desire for the removal of all obstruction to English legislation, Mr. Gladstone intended to remove the Irish members entirely from Westminster. Such a step seemed to lead immediately to separation. Some form of supremacy might be reserved to the imperial Parliament, but a whole important province of the empire would be excluded from all share in imperial affairs. There was cogency in Lord Hartington's argument that the process applied to other parts of the empire would leave the English members alone as the representatives of imperial rule. But far more than any logical dilemma involved in the Bill, it was the character of the Irish and the Irish party which chiefly stood in the way of its acceptance. It was not given to the majority of men to feel the same faith in the good results of justice as was felt by Mr. Gladstone. It seemed an extraordinary thing to dream of handing over the government of a country, and with it the fate of a loyal minority who were opposed in every point to the popular feeling, to men who had shown themselves so violent and disloyal and so ready to set contracts at defiance; yet by the enactments of the Bill it was contemplated that the judicial power, the finances (with one exception), and, after a brief interval, all the police, were to be intrusted to the party of disorder. Were the

Serious objections to Home Rule.

securities worth anything more than the paper on which they were written? Would not the payment to the English Exchequer be regarded before long as a hostile tribute to be refused? Would the powerful priesthood of the Roman Church be contented to maintain a position of tolerant neutrality? Among the Conservatives there was no doubt as to how these questions should be answered. The exclusion of the chief sectional heads of the Liberal party from any share in formulating the new policy, and the consequent uncompromising character of the Bill, produced from the Liberal ranks an answer scarcely less certain. While one section sided unreservedly with the Tories in opposition to the political arrangement, another found in the clauses of the Land Bill a further ground of opposition. Although Mr. Chamberlain had contemplated a great compulsory sale of land going hand-in-hand with a general extension of the authority of local bodies, he saw in the enormous burden which would be laid on the English taxpayer if the Bill was accepted a sufficient cause for opposition, even had he not shared, as he did, in the general objection to what he considered as the dismemberment of the empire.

**Opposition of
Tories and half
the Liberals.**

**Lord Spencer
supports the
Government.**

Upon lines such as those here indicated the great battle was fought. The time that intervened between the first and second reading, which was co-incident with the Easter recess, was employed by all parties in persistent efforts to strengthen their position. The adhesion of Lord Spencer to the Government could not but be regarded as one of the strongest arguments in favour of the Bill. A man of high character, who had carried out his duties in Ireland with marked efficiency, the respect he inspired won still further support from his experience. His speech at Newcastle (January 22), whither he went in company with Mr. John Morley, placed in its best light the conception of the Government proposals formed by honest and liberal minds. After explaining how impossible it was to follow the old methods of government, and declaring the necessity of the close connection between the two Bills, he went on to state his trust in those to whom it was proposed to hand over the government. He could say without hesitation that he had never heard or seen any evidence of complicity in crime established against any of the Irish representatives; he believed them to have an affection for and real interest in the welfare of their country. But he considered that it would be most unfair to leave to a new Irish Assembly the difficulties of the land question unsettled, or to leave the landlords of Ireland unprotected and uncared for. He concluded his speech in

these words: "If I thought that Mr. Gladstone's policy would lead to dismemberment of the empire, if I thought it would lead to separation, or involve the repudiation of debts, or stir up enmity between the various classes in Ireland, or rouse religious intolerance in the country, I for one should not have raised my voice in support of it. I have no such fear. I have confidence that the Irish constituencies will return members to Parliament who will be faithful to their trust, and that among them the mercantile, learned, and intellectual classes of the community will be represented, and that these men will be ready to do their best to solve the problems before them."

But it was probably neither on the utterances of Mr. Gladstone's followers, nor on those of the Tory party, whose opinions and views were clearly known, that the public interest was centred, but upon the utterances of the leaders of the various sections into which the Liberal party was now broken. Whether the Bills should pass or not depended plainly upon the amount of success attending the efforts to reunite the party. That the Whigs could be induced to return to their allegiance seemed hopeless. At a great meeting in Her Majesty's Theatre (April 14) they had appeared side by side with the Conservative opposition, and had taken the lead in declaring their fixed objections to Mr. Gladstone's policy; and the action of Lord Hartington's constituents, who demanded an explanation of his presence there, had given him an opportunity of emphasising all he had said against the Bills. An organised campaign in Scotland, in which Mr. Goschen and Lord Hartington were the principal speakers, made the firmness of their attitude still more obvious. Mr. Chamberlain's action was not regarded as so certain; but it soon became plain that his support could only be won by an amount of amendment to the Bill which the Government could not be expected to allow. Against the Land Bill he declared himself absolutely (May 8); nothing would induce him to consent to a vast expenditure of English money with the object of purchasing acquiescence to the Home Rule Bill which he regarded as faulty. This essential fault lay, in his opinion, in the removal of the Irish members from the imperial Parliament. Apparently if that point could have been dropped along with the Land Bill he might have found it possible to support the second reading.

In his overwhelming eagerness to pass the Bill on which he believed the prosperity of Ireland rested, Mr. Gladstone began to give way. He was ready, only too ready for his own reputation, to make concessions. Things which had been spoken of as vital were minimised. Plans all more or less inconvenient and

Views of
Hartington,
Goschen, and
Chamberlain.

Gladstone's
concessions.

cumbersome were produced to rectify the great error of the scheme, the exclusion of the Irish members. The Land Bill, which had been introduced as an integral part of the whole scheme, and as the necessary supplement to the Home Rule Bill, was now declared to be separable from it; to vote for the one did not imply approbation of the other. Thus, when on the 10th of May the Bill came on for the second reading, there seemed to be truth in the charge that Mr. Gladstone was introducing after all a thing which he had frequently reprobated, a mere abstract resolution. This view was strengthened when he said in his opening speech that he would take long steps to meet the wishes of his followers, but on certain conditions, one of which was that there was not to be a committee-debate (a debate on the minute details of the Bill) before the second reading. Such a course laid him open to much misrepresentation. Charges of inconsistency and of yielding merely for the sake of keeping office were freely levelled at him. He had, as a matter of fact, found it necessary to contemplate modifications so grave as to necessitate a complete remodelling of the Bill. When, on a motion for adjournment of the House, information was extracted from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the intention of the Government was to prorogue the House and bring in a new remodelled Bill in the next session, the fate of the measure was sealed. There was no difficulty in urging the absurdity of demanding a vote upon the second reading of a Bill which was confessedly dead. The debate indeed continued for several nights, but it was scarcely to be expected that a majority would pledge themselves to a principle and, as it was understood, to the acceptance of a future and unknown Bill. When at length the question was put, and the strange sight of a Whig and a Radical acting as tellers for the Opposition to a Liberal Government was seen, it was found that 93 Liberals had withdrawn from their party, and that the Government was in a minority of 30 in a house of 656. Mr. Gladstone accepted his defeat, and, believing that he would still be able to maintain a majority in the constituencies, determined at once to place the decision in their hands.

**Defeat of the
Home Rule
Bill.**

**General elec-
tion, July 17,
1886.**

On the 26th of June this short Parliament was dissolved, and the excitement of a general election began. As was inevitable, the addresses of the leaders laid stress some on one scheme some on another. Thus Mr. Chamberlain clung to his view in favour of a general Local Government Bill, in which Scotland, Wales, and Ireland might all be similarly treated. Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen seemed chiefly interested in the

injustice and, indeed, impossibility of handing the Ulster loyalists over to such men as would almost certainly become the national representatives under a Home Rule scheme. On the other side, while Lord Spencer continued to urge that the Home Rule and the Land Purchase Bills went hand in hand, and that the Irish were worthy to be trusted, Mr. Morley defended the removal of the Irish members from the imperial Parliament. But, whatever the form taken by the addresses, the line of cleavage was really that stated by Mr. Gladstone himself. He owned that the Bill in its old shape was dead, and declared that the critical question was the broad principle whether under some form or other the Irish should or should not govern their own affairs. It was scarcely wise from a party point of view, or even for the purpose of obtaining the object he so ardently desired, to rest the issue on so ill-defined a ground. To say that his Bill was dead seemed in fact to acknowledge that in framing it he had mistaken the wishes of his own party and of the English constituencies. It might not unreasonably be asked, what securities were offered that if he was again intrusted with power he would not fall into some similar error; while at the same time his supporters would be pledged to vote for a Bill of which they might not approve, but which purported to be the practical outcome of the principle for which they had voted. The result of the elections proved at all events conclusively that the constituencies were not ready, to use the language of the time, "to send representatives to Parliament with a mandate to secure Irish self-government." A notable increase in the Conservative ranks, and the election of no less than 78 Liberals who for the time threw in their lot with the Conservatives, placed Gladstonians and Parnellites combined in a minority of 113. Lord Salisbury could say with truth that the one mandate given was to preserve untouched the legislative union of the two countries. So clear was the voice of the elections that Mr. Gladstone at once resigned, and Lord Salisbury again undertook the Administration (July 20, 1886).

**Resignation of
the Ministry.**

The break-up of the Liberal party was consummated, and the power of what has been spoken of as "the greatest instrument of progress the world has ever seen" was paralysed.

of the Conservative party. But it was impossible entirely to disregard the opinions and tendencies of the allies to whom he owed his position. Indeed, the movement of national thought on most subjects had been so markedly in a Liberal direction, that its recognition had become necessary. Ever since the establishment of the new constituency, active politicians had felt the necessity of securing its support. A party, not very well defined but of growing importance, who were roughly spoken of as "The Tory Democrats," had come into existence, and had found a spokesman and leader in Lord Randolph Churchill. On many points it was difficult to distinguish his views from those of an advanced Liberal. He had constantly urged the necessity of making use of young men in full touch with the popular feeling; and he had so far persuaded Lord Salisbury to adopt his views, that he now found himself, somewhat to the surprise of the public, made Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new Ministry, and intrusted with the leadership of the House of Commons.

Lord Randolph
Churchill
Chancellor of
the Exchequer.

Though this appointment may have given promise of a liberal treatment of social questions in England, it could scarcely fail to be very irritating to the Irish and the Home Rulers. Not only had Lord Randolph Churchill always exhibited bitter antagonism to the Home Rule scheme, and expressed his disapproval in violent and contemptuous language, but early in this year he had visited the north of Ireland, and had there, in his attempt to rouse the temper of the Orange minority, used such vehemence that his language appeared to many to be nothing less than an incitement to rebellion. His visit had been followed by violent riots in Belfast, which continued to break out again and again for more than a year, causing much loss of property and even of life. It was therefore only natural that when, as Leader of the House, Lord Randolph Churchill (August 1886) sketched the policy of the Government, his adversaries should find a dangerous meaning in his studiously guarded words. He explained that breaches of social disorder were to be suppressed by means of the ordinary law, so as to allow the legislation of their predecessors a fair chance of success; and that a scheme of local government was to be produced applicable to all the four kingdoms which constituted Great Britain.

Consequences
of his visit to
Belfast.

His words were at once treated as an invitation to the landlords of Ireland to use to the full their legal powers, and as a promise that the executive would do its best to support them. No such incitement was necessary. The Irish

Effect of his
speech on the
Irish landlords.

had accepted the failure of Mr. Gladstone's legislation with remarkable patience. The introduction of the Home Rule Bill had filled them with hope; to them its rejection was not a mere party defeat, it was little less than a great national disaster; yet, probably hoping that the Liberal party might still succeed in healing its internal dissensions, they had kept reasonably quiet. But economical pressure touches more closely than political defeat, and the condition of Irish agriculture in the face of falling prices was becoming daily worse. The general depression had seriously affected Ireland after the recent settlement of judicial rents, and the tenants now declared that even those reduced payments were beyond their means. On the other hand, it was not unnatural that the landlords, who regarded the Land Act of 1881 as a final settlement for which they had paid an enormous price, should have thought it right to insist upon the payment of their legal demands. In some instances they had mercifully held their

**Increase of
evictions.**

hand, but undoubtedly evictions had largely increased, and no incitement to stricter measures seemed needed.

It was the tenants rather than the landlords who required support. But no immediate assistance could be expected. A Commission had been issued to inquire into the working of the Land Act, and until it reported, as Lord Randolph Churchill had said, the law was to take its course. An amendment in favour of evicted tenants, moved to the Address (August 24) by Mr. Parnell, had been thrown out. Lord Hartington and his friends had gone even beyond the Conservatives in their opposition to it, and in their assertions of disbelief in the incapacity of the tenants to meet their rents.

A few weeks later a more definite attempt to move the Government

**Parnell's
Tenant Relief
Bill rejected.**

was made by the Irish leader, when he brought in a Tenants' Relief Bill (September 10, 1886). This Bill proposed three things: that leaseholders should be admitted to the benefit of the Land Act; that power should be given to both landlord and tenant to appeal to the Court for an alteration of the judicial rent; and that the Land Court should be authorised to stay eviction when the tenant had paid half the rent. Of these three, the last was at the instant by far the most important. That there was a real need for some such measure seems certain. The Government, through their agent, Sir Redvers Buller, who had been sent on an ill-defined mission to the disturbed districts, and through the Irish Secretary himself, were compelled to use their influence to induce the landlords to refrain from pressing their demands. Mr. Parnell's Bill however was, almost as a matter of

course, rejected (September 27). The Liberal Unionists through Lord Hartington, the Conservatives by the voice of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, while acknowledging that there were cases in which the tenants were incapable of paying the rent, joined in deprecating any general change or revision of the existing Land Law.

Mr. Parnell had not been sparing in prophecies, which were little short of threats, of the agitation which might be expected to follow the rejection of his measure; and it was not long before his prophecies were fulfilled. Less than three weeks after its rejection, the "Plan of Campaign," which was to play so large a part in the difficulties of the coming months, was indicated by Mr. Dillon in a speech at a meeting of Lord Clanricarde's tenants at Woodford. There is no doubt that Lord Clanricarde, an absentee landlord, had refused to listen to any arguments in favour of mercy, and had proceeded to eviction when the tenants in their distress refused to pay rents which they could not afford. The evictions had been the occasion of much disturbance and violence. It was under these circumstances that Mr. Dillon sketched a plan, which was subsequently accepted by the National League, and published in set form in *United Ireland*. The plan was ingenious. It was not to be universal in its action, but to be carried out by the tenants of each estate on which it might be needed. The tenants were to organise themselves, and to agree upon the amount of rent which they could afford. This they were to offer to the landlord, and if he refused it, they were to pay it over to a committee, which was to take charge of it and employ it in carrying on the struggle with the landlord. "There is thus," said *United Ireland*, "practically a half-year's rent of the estate put aside to fight the landlord. This is a fund which, if properly utilised, will reduce any landlord in Ireland." The plan was at once accepted, but was not actually used on more than some forty estates. So dangerous a movement forced the Irish question to the front. During the recess the Government attempted to check it by the apprehension of Mr. Dillon and Mr. William O'Brien. The attempt was a failure; for these leaders, when discharged on bail, continued to carry on their agitation as before. It became a matter of deep interest to know what line the Government would take when Parliament reassembled (January 27, 1887).

Before that event a somewhat unexpected change had taken place in the Ministry. Lord Salisbury had found it necessary to part with the eccentric and unmanageable ally, with whose popular views he had hoped to

The "Plan of
Campaign,"
Oct. 1886.

Changes in the
Ministry.
Jan. 4, 1887.

strengthen the Government. Just before Christmas Lord Randolph Churchill suddenly resigned. The avowed cause of his resignation was inability to agree in the large expenditure his colleagues were contemplating for the army and navy, but there were probably other points of difference. In regard to the intended Local Government Bill and to foreign policy, as well as to the amount of coercion necessary in Ireland, he was believed to hold views not in accordance with those of the Prime Minister. At all events his resignation was at once accepted and no efforts were made to retain his services. Lord Salisbury was now free to attempt once more a coalition with the Liberal Unionists. Again the chiefs of the two sections of that party, Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, remained firm to their purpose of maintaining their position as Liberals except on the one point of Ireland. But Mr. Goschen, who had already given proof, by voluntarily excluding himself from office, of his disapproval of one of the most important steps the Liberal party had taken, felt justified under the present circumstances in transferring his allegiance. There was indeed but little in the avowed policy of the Government with which a Liberal of the old school could not heartily agree. Mr. Goschen

**Mr. Goschen
Chancellor of
the Exchequer.**

accepted the vacant office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. As all other Liberal Unionists declined to join Lord Salisbury, the reconstitution of the Ministry was confined to departmental changes. The Leadership of the House fell to Mr. W. H. Smith, with the post of First Lord of the Treasury. Lord Iddesleigh surrendered Foreign Affairs into the hands of Lord Salisbury himself, and shortly afterwards closed a life of singularly amiable and consistent statesmanship. Sir Henry Holland joined the Cabinet as Minister for the Colonies, and the Hon. E. Stanhope as Secretary for War.

Much more important was the opportunity which seemed to be afforded for the reconstitution of the Liberal party. The Radical section of the Unionists could not but feel that on every point of vital interest except Ireland they still thought with their old friends. The idea was suggested, and at once accepted, that a small number of representatives of the various sections should meet, and find if possible some line of policy on which they could all agree. Hence arose the

**The Round-
table Confer-
ence.**

Conference which is known as "The Round Table." Unfortunately it came to nothing. Who was to blame, or where the rupture actually occurred, it is difficult to say. Such accounts as could be gathered from the words of the various members of the meeting were not easy to reconcile.

But it is plain that the disagreements were not likely to be smoothed away by the utterances of so incisive an orator as Mr. Chamberlain. There was moreover too well-marked a line of severance to allow of a reunion, and probably also too strong a mistrust of Mr. Gladstone to allow of any terms which did not contain a distinct surrender on his part. Although this definite effort failed, there was constantly an undercurrent of effort and suggestion that some reconstitution of the Liberal party might be arrived at. The possibility of such a union had a strong effect upon the legislation of the Conservative Ministry.

The amount of time wasted on the debate on the Address seemed to prove the inadequacy of even the amended rules of procedure under which it was carried on. Moreover, **New rules of procedure.** certain disagreeable incidents arising from the exercise by the Speaker of the power intrusted to him to decide when the time of closure had arrived, warned the House that a responsibility had been placed upon him which might render his position intolerable. The chief feature of the new rules, which were carried (March 18, 1887) after much angry opposition, was the removal from the Speaker of the greater part of this responsibility. Henceforward any member was competent to move the closure with leave from the Chair; the motion was to pass without discussion, and, if it proved to be adequately supported, was to put an end to the debate. Armed with this new weapon against obstruction, the Government proceeded to introduce their two Irish measures, the Crimes Bill in the Lower House, the Land Bill in the House of Lords.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill differed materially from the ordinary Coercion Acts of previous Ministries; it was chiefly intended to clear the way for legislation of a more conciliatory character than any which had yet emanated from the Conservative side. To meet the ever-recurring unrest of the Irish, two methods had always presented themselves, repression or conciliation. A combination of the two had formed the usual basis of the Liberal treatment of the difficult problem; but constant failure had driven the Liberals to the frank acceptance of one branch alone of the alternative, and the Home Rule Bill had expressed Mr. Gladstone's large conception of what conciliation meant. The keynote of the Conservative policy had hitherto been repression. The rejection of the Home Rule Bill, coupled with agricultural distress and the agrarian agitation which had taken form in the "plan of campaign," had again raised the old question in its most acute form. Even if long experience of failure had not discredited special Coercion Acts,

**Criminal Law
Amendment
Bill.**

the constitution of the present Ministry forbade the introduction of such a measure. A Ministry which depended for its existence upon its alliance with men whose sympathies were entirely Liberal except on the one point of the maintenance of the union, could not afford to follow the old repressive policy of the Conservative party; the already expressed determination of the Government to attempt to rule Ireland by the ordinary law was generally understood as a confession of this impossibility. Conciliation in some form could no longer be avoided; and the idea had been conceived that, under the form of local self-government, a system of administration might be established more popular and more in accordance with Irish ideas than that which now existed. But it appeared a grave mistake to set on foot any such plan of decentralisation without first safeguarding social order, without placing in the hands of the central authority sufficient means of protecting the interests of the minority. To establish Local Government under the shadow of a Coercion Act was almost a contradiction in terms; and the Government, having brought themselves to confess that Ireland had characteristics of its own and required special arrangements, determined to introduce, instead of a temporary Coercion Bill, a permanent alteration in the criminal procedure of the country. The undoubtedly disturbed condition of much of Ireland, with the prevalence of agrarian outrages, was largely caused by the existence of combinations which practically set up a law different from and antagonistic to the ordinary law. The aim of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was to restrain these combinations by placing extraordinary powers in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant. He was authorised to declare leagues or combinations illegal, and to proclaim disturbed districts, which were then to pass under a system which was little less than arbitrary government. Side by side with the danger arising from leagues and combinations went the extraordinary difficulty of convicting accused persons; even when the evidence against them was of the strongest character, juries refused to find them guilty. In order to withdraw criminal trials from the influence of organised intimidation or local sympathy, the new law contemplated, under certain circumstances, the transference of the proceedings not only to a different part of Ireland, but altogether into England.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on the 28th of March. Mr. Balfour made a good case for the necessity of some change in the criminal law; 970 persons were under special police protection, and the cost, which was thrown on the ratepayers, was no

**Introduction of
the Crimes Bill,
March 28,
1887.**

less than £350,000 a year. The judges had again and again drawn attention to the prevalent lawlessness and to the extreme difficulty of obtaining witnesses or verdicts. As a striking instance, he quoted the words of Mr. Justice Murphy when a verdict of "Not guilty" had been returned: "Gentlemen, your verdict is contrary to the evidence; it is your privilege to disregard the evidence and your oaths." These results Mr. Balfour traced to intimidation, exercised indirectly, if not directly, by the National League. "We cannot forget," he said, "that the League leans in part upon those dark secret societies who work by dynamite and the dagger, whose object is anarchy, and whose means are assassination." The first reading of the Bill aroused the liveliest opposition, and was only secured by the movement of the closure amid a scene of wild confusion. The second reading gave rise to an incident which, though at the time it passed over without result, made a deep impression, and, when coupled with further accusations of a similar nature, was the beginning of those exciting and dramatic events which attended the Parnell Commission in the following year. The suggestion of Mr. Balfour as to the character of the National League was repeated as a definite accusation by Colonel Saunderson, the leader of the Ulster Unionists. He declared that the Executive Committee of the Land League contained in it treasonable persons and murderers, and that Mr. Parnell and his friends were aware of it. Both Mr. Healy and Mr. Sexton gave Colonel Saunderson the lie direct, and after much dispute the accusation was withdrawn. A few days afterwards (April 18) there appeared in the *Times* what purported to be a facsimile letter of Mr. Parnell, dated May 15, 1882, which, if it had been genuine, seemed to prove that he had countenanced the murder of Mr. Burke. Mr. Parnell declared the letter to be a forgery, and reiterated his disapproval of the murder in the strongest terms. Immediately after this denial the second reading of the Bill was passed.

Second reading
of the
Crimes Bill.

In Committee the opposition was continued with even greater vehemence. Every word in the Bill produced amendments pushed to division, until at length, on the 10th of June, Mr. W. H. Smith moved and carried that, the Bill having already occupied thirty-five days, the remaining clauses should be put to the House without debate, unless the Committee had completed its work by ten o'clock on the 17th of June. At the fatal hour, the Committee having only reached the 6th clause, Sir Charles Russell, who was speaking, was interrupted, and the remaining clauses were immediately passed without division. The Irish members protested by rising in a body and marching out of the

House. A similar scene attended the closure of the debate at the Report stage; but, as is usual in the case of such protests, the only result was the comparative ease with which all amendments were rejected; and, on the 18th of July, the Bill passed into law.

Hand-in-hand with this stringent Bill went a remedial measure, introduced in the House of Lords on the 31st of March. There was a tolerable consensus among the various sections of the Unionists in favour of largely increasing the purchase clauses of the previous Land Acts. The dual ownership, called into general existence by Mr. Gladstone's legislation, was regarded as the chief cause of the tenants' discontent; its destruction, and the substitution of small holdings in full property, was the object to be aimed at. This had indeed been the object of Mr. Gladstone's last unfortunate Land Bill. The chief objection urged against that Bill had been the risk run by the English taxpayer of being called upon to pay an enormous sum; some method had therefore to be found by which this risk could be avoided. But, while this method was being discovered and formulated, there were other evils demanding instant attention, and it was to these that the Land Bill of the present session was directed.

The report from Lord Cowper's Commission, for which the Government had been waiting, had now arrived. It proved to be in favour of a revision of the judicial rents on the ground of the recent change in agricultural prices. This conclusion the Government rejected; they declined to touch what they called the sanctity of contract, or to disturb what had been intended for a final settlement. But in their Bill they made several concessions; leaseholders, hitherto excluded, were to be allowed to seek a judicial revision of their rents; long leaseholders who had sub-let their lands were to be permitted to break their leases if their tenants' rents were reduced; an evicted tenant might be allowed to remain as a caretaker; the landlord who could get no rent was to be exempted from the payment of rates; and finally, what was most important and was supposed to satisfy the claims of those whose rents were too high, the County Courts were to be given an equitable jurisdiction, the right of allowing time for payment, and the right even of relieving the applicant of all his debts and making him a bankrupt. The Bill, being thus one of concession, and confessedly confined to remedy certain difficulties arising from the legislation of 1881, encountered but slight opposition. Its third reading was carried in the House of Commons on August 6, 1887. It was however

Land Bill introduced, March 31, 1887.

Land Bill carried, Aug. 6, 1887.

but little liked by the Liberal Unionists. The chief objections they found in the Bill were the omission of all power of revision of the judicial rents, and the clause which gave the County Courts the power of relieving an applicant of his arrears only by making him a bankrupt; such an extreme step would no doubt afford him some sort of relief, but at the cost of an undeserved loss of self-respect. To these objections Mr. Chamberlain had given expression in the Lower House, and the feeling of disapproval was so strong, that when the Bill came to the Upper House, Lord Salisbury found it necessary to make several serious changes in it, some of which seemed to touch even the principle of the Bill. On both the chief points of disagreement the Government gave way. The clause with regard to bankruptcy was given up, and under certain limited conditions the revision of judicial rents by the Land Court was allowed. Such serious modifications were a practical surrender to the demands of the Liberal Unionists. So strongly was this felt by the Irish landlords, that they spoke of the acceptance of the amendments as nothing less than an act of betrayal on the part of the Conservative Government.

The Criminal Law Amendment Act in the hands of Mr. Balfour, who, on the 5th of March, had succeeded Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as Chief Secretary for Ireland, was not allowed to remain a dead letter. Indeed, activity was almost forced upon him. The language of Mr. Davitt at Bodyke, where, while supporting the Plan of Campaign, he blamed his party for the moderation of their demands, was a direct challenge to the Government. A proclamation was at once issued, placing Ireland under the Crimes Act; and on Mr. W. O'Brien, as editor of *United Ireland*, continuing to encourage the people in opposition to the police, the National League was declared by the Lord Lieutenant to be a "dangerous association." A regular war between the Nationalists and the Administration was thus begun. Again and again meetings were proclaimed as illegal, again and again they were held in spite of the proclamation. Nor was the disturbance confined to the Irish. English sympathy was excited by the apparent violence of the Administration, and a certain number of the more eager Radicals threw themselves vehemently into the movement, and frequently attended and even addressed the illegal meetings. On the 9th of September a peculiarly disastrous collision took place between the people and the police at Michelstown. There Mr. O'Brien and other leaders had been summoned before the petty sessions. Though they did not appear, the judicial

Mr. Balfour as
Irish Secre-
tary.

Michelstown,
Sept. 9, 1887.

proceedings were carried on, and warrants issued for their arrest. No sooner was this known than a wild popular meeting was held, the people coming in from all the country round and giving an enthusiastic reception to Mr. Dillon, who was accompanied by Mr. Labouchere and other English members of Parliament. It had always been the policy of the Irish leaders to allow without objection the presence of a Government reporter at their meetings. In the present instance the reporter arrived late, tried to force his way through the closely packed crowd to the platform, and called upon a strong body of police to assist him. Their presence, and perhaps their roughness, roused the anger of the people; the police were unable to effect their object, and were driven back to their barracks. They there, either in fear or anger, fired upon the crowd with fatal result, and were only extricated from their awkward position with great difficulty, and chiefly by the efforts of the Irish leaders. The Coroner's jury brought in a verdict of wilful murder against the inspector and three of the constables; but in spite of this they were not prosecuted. The event remained as an evil memory of coercion unsuccessfully attempted, and of the processes of law set at nought by the authorities. Meanwhile the war, if it may be so called, went on. Of the illegal meetings the most important was one at Woodford, where the troops and police were evaded, and the meeting held at night after the people had apparently dispersed.

**Imprisonment
of W. O'Brien,
Oct. 1887.**

At the end of October Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Sullivan, and Mr. Wilfred Blunt were apprehended, convicted, and imprisoned. An unseemly quarrel then arose between Mr. Balfour and Mr. O'Brien as to the wearing of prison clothes, a quarrel ridiculous enough in itself, but of real interest as showing that, in the eyes of Government, offenders under the new Criminal Law Amendment Act were not regarded as political prisoners, but as ordinary law-breakers.

These violent scenes, and the disaffection of the Irish, were a melancholy blot upon the satisfaction which should have marked the year of the Queen's Jubilee. In many respects the nation had good cause for congratulation; and the august lady, whose fiftieth year of sympathetic rule was being celebrated, might well look back with satisfaction upon the constant growth of her dominions, their advance in wealth, the increased stability of their institutions resting on an ever-widening basis, and the brilliant intellectual and scientific life which had marked her reign. The enthusiastic love of her people, the personal kindness and affection with which she was regarded by all her subjects, exhibited as it

**The Jubilee,
June 21, 1887.**

was in the thronging crowds attending the various state functions in which she took a part during the Jubilee week, constituted in one respect their chief value. From a political point of view they were equally valuable as giving outward expression to the strong undercurrent of a desire for some closer connection between the various branches of the empire, so keenly felt at this time. Not only did the presence of Indian Princes and Colonial Governors at the State celebrations tell of the vast extension of the British empire, but the imperial idea (in spite of the unquestioned difficulties which lay in its way) seemed to have taken a first step towards realisation in the Colonial Conference held under the presidency of Sir Henry Holland, and in the establishment of the Imperial Institute as a great memorial of the Jubilee. The Conference was called upon to discuss many subjects of imperial interest, and to suggest points of contact between the scattered parts of the empire. Diverse though the interests involved necessarily were, Lord Salisbury, in his address to the assembled representatives, was able at least to urge the need of mutual defence in face of the growing desire for expansion visible in other nations. Subsequent events have shown that the Prime Minister was right in confining himself to that point. Such changes as are involved in the formation of a great federal empire are of slow development. The attempt to treat them as though they were already made, and to create a single great central exchange of literary, economical, and scientific ideas for the empire, as though the unification of its scattered parts was already effected (and nothing less than this was the intended object of the Imperial Institute), proved premature. The spirit of imperialism however, recognised at the Jubilee and in the incidents which attended it, has lived on, and yearly acquires fresh force.

The closing of the Parliamentary session in this and in subsequent years afforded no respite to political discussion. An opportunity was on the contrary afforded for more unrestrained expressions of opinion. Oration followed

Political
speeches in the
recess, 1887.

oration in unending procession, with a ceaseless reiteration of the old arguments. The persistency of the Irish question, the angry temper which it excited, the rude personalities and the perversities of party spirit which attended it, were seriously interfering with the proper course of national legislation, and threatened to lower the whole standard of public life. A tone of political rancour and animosity, not often seen in English politics, had made its appearance. The Unionist seceders from the Liberal party, feeling the necessity of

vindicating their position, were unrelenting in their assaults upon their former leader. Bitter attack produced bitter reply, directed for the most part against Mr. Chamberlain, the head of the Radical wing of the Unionists. The line which separated them from their old friends seemed but slight; even as late as February 28, 1889, Mr. Chamberlain in the House called upon the Liberals to formulate their policy of conciliation in resolutions containing the main points at issue, and said that it was not impossible that he might accept them; and as Mr. Gladstone frequently declared himself ready to make considerable alterations in his late Home Rule scheme, it is difficult to see why the acrimonious dispute should have continued, had not men's minds been distorted by personal antipathy and by exaggerated party spirit.

But, indeed, these two great statesmen were entirely antipathetic.

Gladstone and Chamberlain contrasted.

The overmastering sentiment, the high humanitarian morality, the wide—it may almost be called cosmopolitan—view of politics which characterised the older man, were wanting in Mr. Chamberlain, were even repugnant to his essentially practical mind. His position as a Radical member of a Conservative majority, although difficult and at first sight inconsistent, was perfectly in accordance with his real character. Thoroughly radical in the reforms he wished to produce, he had already declared himself in favour of free education; and he was eagerly bent upon a widespread system of local government that should place in the hands of the people the management of their own affairs. But by nature and by early training he was a keen and self-asserting business man. A bargain with him was a sacred thing, a refusal to pay a legal demand involved bankruptcy; and he would listen to no lessening of legally accumulated arrears, or of revised judicial rents which did not carry with them this necessary consequence. A certain dictatorial habit of mind, serving well to support a firm attitude in business negotiations, made any idea of yielding to clamour repugnant to him. And, before all, he had already conceived and declared in many public utterances his widespread imperial views. His chief objection to Home Rule is well summed up in his own words: "It is a strange form of patriotism to a great empire, to wish to break it in pieces." He was thus a Unionist of the Unionists, a Radical in English politics, and a would-be Liberal in Irish politics if only the Irish would do as they were told and would consent to take the things they really wanted without any dislocation of the central authority. A Radical, a masterful Imperialist, his influence in subsequent years on English politics was destined to be paramount.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Mr. Gladstone laid himself open to the attacks levelled against him. While upholding his opinions on wide principles of statesmanship, and declaring his willingness to forego all the objectionable features of his late scheme, he declined to give even the outlines of any new definite plan. He thus certainly gave an opening for mistrust, of which his opponents took full advantage. Unfortunately also he allowed himself to be carried away by his overwhelming eagerness, and made use of expressions which could easily be distorted into assertions in favour of lawlessness. Thus, at the great Liberal Conference at Nottingham, in October 1887, while distinctly declining to lay down any definite plan of action, he went so far as to state that he would not allow any proposals he had previously made, or any opinions he had held, to stand in the way of the settlement of the great question.

**Gladstone's
speeches on
Ireland.**

"I think it is a wide pledge that I give in saying that neither as to the retention of Irish members; nor as to the use of the imperial credit in the purchase of Irish land; nor as to the delegation instead of surrender of power to the Irish Parliament; nor as to the mode of action and the particulars or the times under which the administrative system is to be altered from one that is English and anti-national in spirit to one that is Irish and national in spirit;—to the whole of those proposals the declaration I have made applies. And rely upon it, that neither I nor any infirmities of mine will stand in the way of a settlement desired by the two countries." Yet at the same meeting, in an earlier speech, he had made a bitter attack on the administration of the law in Ireland; he had not scrupled to accuse the police of acting with illegality and brutality; he even implied that they had been guilty of conspiring for the murder of innocent men; he had declared that the disastrous riot at Michelstown must not be forgotten, but must be repeatedly mentioned, "with a view to the formation of a sound opinion in England, in order that the pestilent declarations of Mr. Balfour may not be adopted, as they might be with great excuse, by subordinate agents, and may not be a means of further invasion of Irish liberty or possibly of further destruction of Irish life."

Words such as these were certainly open to the charge freely brought against them that they were incitements to lawlessness; and the wisdom of such rhetorical denunciations of the police might well be questioned in view of the disturbed feeling prevalent among a portion of the lower classes in England at this time, and of such demonstrations of the spirit of

**Imprudence of
Gladstone's
speeches.**

disorder as had been given by the riots in Trafalgar Square in February 1886, and again in October 1887.

For some months meetings of Socialists and of men out of work, either *bonâ fide* unemployed or men drawn from that lowest stratum of society which is permanently unemployed at its own desire, had been held in Trafalgar Square. Encouraged by the vacillating action of Sir Charles Warren, head of the Metropolitan police, at one time positively forbidding access to the Square, at another as hastily withdrawing his prohibition, the Socialists and unemployed had renewed their meetings. Disorderly crowds had marched to the Mansion House, and only a few days before Mr. Gladstone's speech at Nottingham had pushed their way into Westminster Abbey (October 16). The conflict between the forces of disorder and of order reached a climax on Sunday, November 13, 1887. Under colour of protesting against the imprisonment of Mr. W. O'Brien, and for the purpose of testing their disputed right, the Radical leaders called a meeting; and, in spite of the prohibition of Sir Charles Warren, processions from all parts of London converged upon Trafalgar Square. With much serious fighting and free use of their truncheons, the police, who had occupied the Square in the early morning, succeeded in maintaining their position. But so dangerous was the crisis, that it was found necessary to call out the troops and prepare for reading the Riot Act. No lives were lost, but many serious injuries were inflicted on both sides. Several of the more prominent assailants were arrested, among them Mr. John Burns, and Mr. Cunninghame Graham, a member of Parliament. The result of the contest was however regarded as uncertain, and the popular leaders determined to repeat, on the following Sunday, their effort to test the right of meeting. Misled by Mr. Gladstone's eloquence, they applied to him to sanction their proceedings. Their application, as they might have expected, produced a clear declaration that the duty of the citizen was to respect the officers of the law, whether well or ill advised. This reply, removing all doubt as to the sympathy of the Liberal leader, induced them to change their place of assembly to Hyde Park. Yielding to a somewhat groundless panic, the Home Office summoned 30,000 special constables to the assistance of the police. A comparatively small number volunteered but proved quite sufficient, and the day passed off quietly.

The imprisonment of Mr. John Burns and Mr. Cunninghame Graham, and the desire attributed to the Ministry of putting unconstitutional

limits to the right of free meetings, formed fruitful topics of discussion. But the common-sense view that the orderly traffic of the streets should not be interrupted, and that the police were properly charged with the duty of securing it, prevailed. In spite of a vague socialistic sentiment, the deeply rooted conservatism of all classes of Englishmen did not allow of any serious growth of revolutionary theories, and before long the agitation ceased. No doubt it had had its effect; unusual theories of society were listened to with greater respect, and more attention was paid to the advantages which might be derived from social legislation. But for the most part the form which these aroused feelings took was connected with the facts which had allowed the socialist theories to make themselves heard, rather than with the theories themselves. Men's minds became full of the necessity of ameliorating the condition of the poor and the unemployed. A committee of important people was formed to consider it, under Lord Compton; and a deputation from this committee consisting of such

Deputation to
Lord Salisbury.
Feb. 1888.

leading men as Lord Herschell, Cardinal Manning, and the Bishop of Bedford, waited on the Prime Minister to discuss the question (February 1, 1888). It is much to Lord Salisbury's credit that, fully awake as he was to the sufferings of the poor, he was strong enough to resist the pressure of sentiment, and to declare clearly that, though the objects of the deputation met with his deepest sympathy, he was convinced that "any attempt on the part of the State to step into the place of the employer would only result in producing more frightful and permanent misery than it was designed to remedy." This position he maintained and reasserted two years later. The desire for social amelioration continued steadily to increase; it infected all classes, and, to judge by the abortive Bills introduced, and the occasional suggestions of individual members of Parliament, there was a widespread demand for the legislative regulation of many matters hitherto regarded as better left to individual management.

The unending dispute between labour and capital, the apparently insoluble difficulty of bringing under one head the advantage of employer and employed, were specially prominent at this time. The years 1889 and 1890 were full of the sounds of this industrial war. Strikes, some of which threatened the most necessary processes of life, were of constant occurrence. At one time it seemed as though the supply of coal might be stopped, at another that London might be in darkness from the want of gas, or that the crowded traffic of the streets might be dislocated by a strike of all the omnibus-drivers. Even the civil services were affected, and signs of organised

insubordination were seen both in the Police and in the Post-office. But by far the most important of all the many strikes was that of the London dock labourers in August 1889, not only because it seemed for a time to threaten the very existence of the port of London, but chiefly as being the first great attempt to organise unskilled labour. There could be no question as to the miserable condition of the dock labourers. The element of uncertainty, which is the chief hardship of the labourer's life, was felt by them in an exaggerated form. Except a limited number who were engaged as permanent servants of the company, the great body of dock labourers were never sure of employment for a day or an hour together. Crowded together at the entrance to the docks in numbers far beyond the ordinary requirements, they awaited any scraps of work which the arrival of a ship or any temporary exigencies of the docks might throw in their way. Even when employed their pay was but 5*d.* an hour. For some years, under the intelligent leadership of two dock labourers, Benjamin Tillett and Thomas Mann, they had been gradually learning that only by organisation could they hope to improve their condition. At length, on the 13th of August, a general strike took place in all the docks. Their chief demands were for the addition of a penny an hour to their wages, and the assurance that, if engaged at all, they should not receive less than 2*s.* All kinds of workmen employed in the docks joined in the movement, until the strikers numbered nearly 100,000, and the work came to a complete standstill. In some instances the merchants and their clerks performed the absolutely necessary duties. An amalgamation which had lately taken place brought the men face to face with a joint committee of all the great dock companies at once. This committee was willing to agree to the minimum wage of 2*s.*, but refused to listen to further claims. For nearly five weeks the struggle continued. The loss to all parties was enormous, the suffering of the wretched dock labourers and their families can scarcely be exaggerated. At length a committee of volunteer sympathisers, including the Lord Mayor, the Bishop of London, and Cardinal Manning, succeeded in arriving at some sort of compromise, by which the chief claims of the men were satisfied.

It was a terrible incident in the great industrial war; but its importance is chiefly to be found in the sympathy with which the strikers were regarded by the public, and in certain indications in it which seemed to threaten a general combination of labour against capital. The subscriptions received, not only from England, but from the Colonies,

**Dock Strike,
1889.**

**General
sympathy with
the strike.**

were so large that, after satisfying all claims to compensation, the Strike Committee are said to have had £5000 left in their hands. In the height of the struggle a manifesto was issued, definitely calling upon all classes of workmen to make common cause with the strikers; there seemed for the moment a chance of a general breakdown of the existing social system. It is greatly to the credit of the men that little or no outrage was committed, and to the credit of the administration that the police were carefully held aloof from the quarrel. In spite of the very threatening symptoms in all parts of England, employers and employed settled their differences among themselves, and the decisions of the general meeting of Trades Unions held at Dundee in the autumn of 1889 seemed to show that the anti-socialist feeling of these Unions was still paramount. An inquiry sent out by the Dundee Congress to discover the opinion of workmen as to legislative establishment of an eight hours' day received only a limited number of answers, but of these the large majority were in the negative.

Yet the effect of the dock strike was remarkable. It led to the establishment of what is known as the New Unionism, which differed from the principles on which Trades Unions had hitherto rested, by acknowledging the claims of unskilled labour and recognising the solidarity of the interests of the whole working-class, whether artisan or agriculturalist. And with this went a general feeling, not confined to the working-class, in favour of municipal or legislative interference, some approach in fact to State socialism. This was strikingly illustrated in the Trades Union Congress of the following year, 1890, by the changed tone of the leaders and the stress that was laid on municipal action; and it found a practical expression in Parliament in the proposal to fix an eight hours' day, at all events for work in the coal mines. Both Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain made declarations which seemed to imply that the interference of the State in such questions might under certain circumstances be allowed. But again Lord Salisbury set his face against all legislative interference, and, in his speech at Guildhall in November 1890, strongly deprecated all interference between capital and labour. He threw scorn on the Eight Hours' Bill and all similar hindrances to individual freedom, which would only frighten capital away from England and settle it elsewhere. The workmen would be the first to suffer, "on whose behalf unwise theorists and timid or interested politicians were preaching various arrangements such as the modern world had never seen, and which

New Union-
ism, 1890.

savoured of the darkest superstitions by which industries were ever oppressed."

In these lengthened disputes affecting the distribution of property, Lord Salisbury had consistently maintained his Conservative attitude; yet the whole course of his policy was profoundly influenced by the alliance into which he had been forced. It was indeed impossible for a Minister, who owed his tenure of power to the support of those who had long been his most active opponents, to avoid making very important concessions. Lord Salisbury frankly admitted that this was the case. At a meeting of the party held at Liverpool as early as January 11, 1888, he had warned his Tory supporters that they must expect to find a strong tinge of Liberalism in the propositions of the Government, and urged them, for the sake of the great imperial object which he and they alike had in view, to consent to some necessary compromise. This confession of their leader was of the deepest significance, for it implied the almost complete disappearance of the old Conservative party. It became constantly more evident that all possibility of the reunion of the fragments of the old Liberal party was passing away, and that an alliance so firm as that which bound the Liberal Unionists to the Conservatives must sooner or later lead to a complete fusion. It was impossible to suppose that the self-denial exercised by Lord Hartington and his friends would last for ever, or that men of such leading character could be permanently excluded from the Government. Already one of the most distinguished representatives of the Conservative wing of the Liberal Unionist party had found it possible to cross the line and join the Government. But though the transference of Mr. Goschen's great ability to the government side of the House marked the formal alliance of the Liberal and Conservative Unionists, a more practical and combative ally was found in Mr. Chamberlain, hitherto the leader of the advanced Radicals. It was not without surprise that he was seen to adopt a line of conduct apparently in contradiction to all his previous political life; yet this surprise, natural though it was at the time, was not wholly well grounded. With one section of the party included under the general name of Conservative, his energetic and constructive character was in no way at variance; the young Tory Democrats were almost as eager as he was for practical reforms; the Radical leaven found in them a ready-made material on which to work. It appeared certain that, sooner or later, room must be found in the Unionist Ministry for Mr. Chamberlain. Meanwhile, the views which he represented influenced the action of the Government so largely, and its

**Influence of
the Liberal
Unionists.**

measures were in themselves of so Liberal a tendency, that the opposition they encountered was seldom based upon principles, but consisted in criticism of methods and details, and was exercised in a spirit of party which it is difficult not to stigmatise as perverse.

It was in his recognition of the necessity of not merely an alliance but a fusion with his late opponents, and the skill with which it was effected without any breach of party continuity, almost without remark, that Lord Salisbury's wisdom as a party leader is chiefly to be found. He appears

**Lord Salisbury
as a party
leader.**

to have succeeded in winnowing from the mass of party passion and contemporary interest the principles which he believed to be necessary for the conservation of the Constitution, and to have devoted himself chiefly to maintaining them. Fully awake to the danger of the compromise to which he was consenting, he was at the same time keenly alive to the loss of prestige which the disintegration of party ties inflicted on the Lower House. He was thus led to seek in the House of Lords for a firm standing-ground on which to rest his policy. His use of the constitutional powers of the Lords, his constant employment of members of the Upper House in high places in the Civil Service and in the Cabinet, are characteristic marks of the policy he henceforward pursued. Looking to the other side of the question, it would appear to have been this very spirit of compromise shown by Lord Salisbury, and the readiness with which he accepted the suggestions of his Liberal allies, which imparted a curiously factious air to the conduct assumed at this time by the Opposition and its great leader.

**Gladstone's de-
votion to Home
Rule.**

Mr. Gladstone had grasped with characteristic tenacity the one great truth, that justice required the conciliation of Ireland; that coercion, even though coupled with large concessions and good administration, would fail to produce this conciliation; that it was in fact to be found only in listening to what he believed to be the voice of the nation, and in placing trust in the Irish to work out their own prosperity. This conviction had now become so strong in him, that no half measures, however good in themselves, were tolerable to him; no legislation, however important, seemed of any value so long as the one great act of justice, which was to relieve England from an overwhelming incubus and to satisfy the aspirations of the kindred nation, was left unperformed. Home Rule for Ireland had in fact become his sole object. Unfortunately for his party, the people of England had declared themselves very distinctly at the last election. An overwhelming majority firmly opposed to his object faced him in the House of Commons.

Home Rule was entirely beyond his reach. But as it was the only object which he now regarded as of supreme importance, his followers were practically reduced to a condition of complete impotence. When measures scarcely differing from those they might themselves have initiated were offered them, their only weapon was constant carping criticism of details, sinking sometimes to obstruction. Though powerful enough to render legislation difficult, they had little or no power to influence it. Irish policy, affording unlimited scope for criticism, and handled by men really in earnest, became unduly prominent in Parliament during the whole of this administration.

The words the Prime Minister had addressed to his followers at the Liverpool meeting were intended to prepare them for the introduction of the Local Government Bill, which was to be the great measure of the session. In the speech from the Throne it was this measure, and its accompanying financial arrangements, which occupied the prominent place. But before it could be approached, there was the inevitable discussion upon Irish affairs, in the debate upon the Address. The Crimes Act of the last year had been vigorously worked by Mr. Balfour, and the Government now took credit to themselves for its success. "The result of this legislation has been satisfactory. Agrarian crime has diminished, and the power of coercive conspiracies has sensibly abated." This sentence of the Queen's Speech was a direct challenge to the Irish party. Though the Irish Secretary produced statistics showing a considerable diminution of crimes connected with political agitation, the improvement was attributed by the Opposition to very different causes. To them it was the natural outcome of the ray of hope which the alliance with the English Liberals had thrown upon the desire of the Nationalists, and was by no means due to the drastic measures of the Administration. How drastic these had been was shown by the assertion of Sir George Trevelyan, that "of the eighty-five Irish Nationalist members, one out of every seven was in prison, on his way to prison, or on his way out of prison." The arrest of Mr. Sullivan, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and his speedy liberation amid expressions of the greatest national rejoicing, the elaborate precautions taken to secure the safety of the leaders of the Liberal Unionists during their visit to Dublin, the refusal of a coroner's jury in Clare to bring in a verdict of murder against the men charged upon strong evidence with killing the head constable, Whelehan, and the success of the Plan of Campaign, of which Mr. W. O'Brien could boast on his return, after his

Meeting of
Parliament,
Feb. 9, 1888.

Debate on
Ireland, Feb.
1888.

imprisonment, to Parliament (February 16), certainly gave no proof of the triumph of Government in conciliating Ireland. There was a strong feeling of exasperation against Mr. Balfour among the Opposition, excited chiefly by his determination to treat offences under the Crimes Act as ordinary breaches of the law, and to obliterate the line which had hitherto been drawn between political offenders and common criminals. Much anger was felt at the sight of members of Parliament condemned to undergo the degrading details of prison discipline for breaches of the Crimes Act. The large Government majority however remained unbroken. There seemed no possibility of a union between the two branches of the Liberals, in spite of occasional indications in Mr. Gladstone's speeches that he himself was ready to accept some compromise. As a matter of course, the amendment moved by Mr. Parnell in favour of remission of arrears was thrown out, and, the Address having been passed, the Government could proceed with the ordinary business.

Their first measure was intended to complete the various experiments in the reform of procedure. They introduced a **New procedure set of rules** (February 24, 1888), by which provision was made for the automatic closure of business at certain fixed hours, and for the prevention of dilatory motions or other forms of obstruction, the closure being finally left in the hands of the majority if it consisted of more than a hundred members.

The great financial measure of the session was then introduced. In the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the financial condition of the country and the low rate of interest prevalent at the time justified an operation for the purpose of lightening the public burdens. Following the example of several of his predecessors, he introduced a Bill (March 9, 1888) lowering the interest of a large amount of the national debt. More than £500,000,000 was the amount thus dealt with. Taught by experience that a gradual diminution of interest was likely to receive the more favourable acceptance, Mr. Goschen suggested that a new stock should be created, bearing for fifteen years interest at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and after that time at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which should be guaranteed for the next twenty years. He proposed that a small premium should be given to induce holders to accept the new stock at an early date, and a commission allowed to authorised agents in the transaction. The whole saving to the country in interest was reckoned as likely to be £1,400,000 a year from April 1889 to April 1903, and £2,800,000 a year after that date, when the lower rate of interest would begin,

**Mr. Goschen's
conversion
scheme.**

The plan was exceedingly well received. The only point which met with much opposition was the payment of a commission to authorised agents. This was attacked with some acrimony as being immoral and dishonest; but the declaration of Mr. Childers from the Opposition side of the House, that a similar plan of conversion introduced by himself had been wrecked by the indifference of the bankers, seemed to justify Mr. Goschen's action. The Bill was carried with almost unanimous approbation; and within one month more than £450,000,000 of the new stock was accepted by the public.

The conversion scheme was shortly followed by the introduction of the Budget. Its main points were the diminution of the income-tax, and an increased contribution from the imperial revenue in aid of local taxation. With respect to the first point, Mr. Goschen declared his opinion that the principle of simplicity of taxation might be carried too far, that the income-tax should be regarded as the great reserve for time of need, and that some extension of the sources of revenue was the proper method of meeting ordinary expenditure. With respect to the second point, he proposed that, instead of the £2,600,000 at present devoted to the assistance of local rates, there should be substituted a sum of £5,500,000. The existing licences, which brought in about £3,000,000, with additional licences amounting to £800,000, added to half the probate duty, would supply the required sum.

This large increase to the relief given to local taxation was connected with the great measure for local government which constituted the real work of the session. The Bill, which was introduced (March 19, 1888) and explained with marked ability by Mr. Ritchie, President of the Local Government Board, had long been expected. It proved to be of a very far-reaching, almost revolutionary, character, so much so that it is impossible to regard it as emanating from a Conservative party in the old meaning of that term. It marks the influence direct or indirect of the Liberal Unionists and the younger men who mingled popular sympathies with their Toryism. The administrative power hitherto belonging to the country gentleman was now to be placed in the hands of popularly elected bodies. In each county was to be established a Council elected on the broad basis already adopted in the Municipal Corporation Act, by which the franchise was extended to all ratepayers. The members, thus directly elected by the voters in electoral districts of comparatively equal extent, constituted three-fourths of the Council, and were authorised to elect, either from among their

own body or from outside, additional members of the Council as Aldermen. The ordinary Councillors held office for three years, the Aldermen for six. To this body was intrusted nearly all the powers which had hitherto been exercised by the Justices of the Peace, with the exception of the judicial power which remained as before, and the management of the police, which was placed in the hands of a joint committee consisting of representatives of the justices and of the County Council. Much fear had been entertained that in any widespread alteration the historic boundaries of the counties would be destroyed; they were however wisely maintained in fixing the limits of the jurisdiction of the County Councils. Below the County Council there were to be District Councils, which took the place of Sanitary and Local Boards, their limits being settled by the County Council. The electors to these District Councils were to be the same as those for the County Council. Large cities, and ultimately all boroughs with a population of 50,000, were withdrawn from the counties, and were supplied with the same administrative apparatus as the County Councils, the Local Boards and other separate authorities being merged in the Corporation of the town. The Metropolis was treated slightly differently. It became a separate county, and took over the same duties as the other counties. The Metropolitan Board of Works was thus destroyed. But the police remained in the hands of the Home Office, and the City except in some points remained under the separate authority of the Corporation. The alterations made in the Bill during its passage through the House of Commons were unusually few. The extension of the county status to boroughs of 50,000 inhabitants had not been originally contemplated; and, much more important, the system of compensation for the withdrawal of licences to public-houses, which had formed a part of the original Bill, was omitted in deference to the widely felt fear of establishing once for all a vested interest in such licences. But with these and a few other minor alterations, the great measure, which entirely changed the source of administrative authority, and made England a self-governing country in all the lesser but deeply important details of ordinary life, passed with universal acceptance, and became law in August 1888. The financial arrangements of the bodies constituted by the Bill were facilitated by the provision of £5,600,000 in aid of rates, which was contemplated in Mr. Goschen's Budget.

To the Opposition the flaw in the generally accepted plan was found in the exception of Ireland from its benefits. Similarity and simultaneity of legislation in the two countries had been part of Lord

Randolph Churchill's programme. Mr. Chamberlain had consistently advocated a large measure of local government in Ireland, and even now he declared that he could only support the measure, confined in its application to Great Britain, on the distinct understanding that the circumstances of the time justified some postponement of the extension of its advantages to the sister kingdom.

The existence of these circumstances was plain enough. There was no cessation of disturbance in Ireland. The whole year was occupied in a violent struggle against the severity with which Mr. Balfour carried out the Crimes Act. Whatever may be thought of its ultimate result, the immediate effect of his action was to increase many fold the angry temper with which the conduct of the Castle administration had long been regarded. Meetings held in all directions though proclaimed by Government; their occasional violent suppression; the inadequate strength of the constabulary requiring the presence of troops; the arrest, trial, and imprisonment of no less than seventeen members of Parliament; the bitter and unjustifiable accusations brought against the Chief Secretary; form all together a scene of disastrous disorder. Physical and moral forces proved inefficacious. Even the voice of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, supported by a very decided letter from the Pope, seemed to have lost its ancient power; a general meeting of the Irish Nationalists denounced the letter as unjust and its assertions as untrue. In spite of all that could be done, the Nationalist members could boast that the "plan of campaign" was successful, that on thirty-eight estates it had produced considerable diminutions of rent.

The language used by the Press in its unjustifiable assaults upon Mr. Balfour not unnaturally provoked language scarcely more moderate in reply. In the severity and truculence of its abuse of the Irish party the *Times* took the lead. Its attacks on Mr. O'Donnell compelled him to bring an action for libel against Mr.

Walter, the proprietor of the paper. There were incidents connected with the trial which caused much complaint. It was pointed out that Mr. Walter had interviewed a member of the Government immediately before the trial began, and that the Attorney-General was acting as chief law adviser of the *Times*. No doubt these incidents were unfortunate, but there was probably no ground for questioning the justice of the trial or for implicating the Government in the action of the newspaper. The case went against Mr. O'Donnell. The accusations were certainly grave,

Disturbed condition of Ireland.

Mr. O'Donnell's action against the "Times."

but it could not be proved that he had been specially singled out for attack. During the trial some letters of a very damaging description, purporting to be the work of the National leaders, were read by the Attorney-General. Among others was the one, dated May 15, 1882, which had already been printed in facsimile in the *Times* of April 18, 1887, in which Mr. Parnell was made to use expressions connecting him with the criminal action of the extreme Nationalists, and even implying a guilty knowledge of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. Mr. Parnell had at the time considered it necessary to make an explanation in Parliament, and to declare that the letter was an obvious forgery. He now (July 6, 1888) repeated his assertion, and demanded a select committee to inquire into the matter. This, with questionable wisdom, the Government absolutely refused. They confined themselves to an offer to bring in a Bill appointing a Commission "to inquire into the charges and allegations made against certain members of Parliament and others, defendants in the recent trial." The general terms of this motion rendered it in fact a refusal to examine into the personal charges against Mr. Parnell, and established a judicial Commission charged with the duty of inquiring into the whole action of the two great Irish leagues. The very wide scope of the inquiry was regarded by many with much dislike, and the refusal to afford Mr. Parnell an opportunity of vindicating his character seemed scarcely just. Such as it was, however, the method recommended by the Government met with the approval of the House, and the Bill creating the Commission became law, August 13, 1888.

The Commission consisted of three judges, Sir J. C. Day, Sir A. L. Smith, and Sir James Hannen. Its first meeting was held in September 1888, and its last in November 1889. The Commissioners decided that the inquiry should take the form of a legal trial in which nine formal accusations were brought against the defendants, who were no less than sixty-five in number. The great speeches of Sir Charles Russell on the one side, and the Attorney-General on the other, following as they did the course of Irish history for a considerable number of years, formed as full and consecutive a story of the disturbances as could then be arrived at. Although the questions involved were largely personal, or perhaps for this very reason, few things, though of far more historical importance, have excited such general interest or roused such angry passions as this Commission. For months it was the principal subject on which the eloquence of the Press was exercised, and the common topic of conversation. All the old and half-forgotten outrages were

**The Parnell
Commission.**

again thrust upon public notice, and afforded fresh food to the virulence of the Unionist papers. The final report was not published until February 1890. A whole year before that time, the point on which public interest was centred, the personal charge against Mr. Parnell, had received a signally dramatic refutation. When the authorship of the letter published in facsimile in the *Times*, and purporting to be in Mr. Parnell's handwriting, became the subject of inquiry (February 21, 1889), there appeared in the witness-box a man named Pigott, to whom the letter had been traced. A severe and able cross-examination lasting for two days, conducted by Sir Charles Russell, was followed by the flight of the witness. On the next meeting of the Court, when the examination was to have been continued, Pigott was not there. He had fled to Spain; and before long news reached England of his full confession and suicide (March 1, 1889). As far as Mr. Parnell was concerned, the vindication was complete, and the prosecution was obliged to confess the forgery. But, as Mr. Courtenay, Chairman of Committees, told his constituents, "The verdict, though a triumph for the Irish leader, had no practical result. Whether Mr. Parnell was or was not guilty, the Irish question still remained."

Mr. Courtenay's words unfortunately proved only too true. That the alleged letter of Mr. Parnell was proved to be a forgery, left the real question untouched, though it tended for awhile to increase the power and popularity of the Irish leader. What the exact character of this Irish question was, was by no means certain. To some it appeared a national question, to some political, to some agrarian. The application of remedies would have been an easier matter had this precise character been discovered; but on all hands it was allowed that it included the land question; and the Government were so convinced of this that they were intending to produce a great scheme for its settlement. While preparing a more complete treatment of the subject, they had thought it well to produce a temporary measure; and in the autumn session of 1888 they proposed a Bill for the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act of July 1885. It was hoped that, avowedly partial and temporary as the Bill was, its acceptance might be easily secured. All matter likely to be contentious was omitted, and it was reduced to one simple clause authorising the expenditure of £5,000,000 in order to continue the operation of the existing Act; yet it was only carried after fierce and prolonged opposition. There could be no question as to the success of Lord Ashbourne's Act. Already more than 14,000 applications for agreements between landlords and tenants had been made,

**Extension of
the Ashbourne
Act, Oct. 1888.**

requiring the advance of more than £6,000,000. The applications were confined to no particular part of Ireland, and everywhere the instalments had been regularly paid. In spite however of the increasing desire to take advantage of the Act which was visible even in Connaught, in spite of the proof thus afforded of the general usefulness of the measure in all parts of Ireland, a ground of opposition was found in the possible difficulty of applying its provisions to the poorer and more congested districts, where the poverty of the tenants might render it impossible to find sufficient security to justify the Government advances.

Useful though this stop-gap Act certainly was, it had little effect in preventing the political side of the Irish question from reappearing in an aggravated form in the long debate on the Address which followed the opening of Parliament in 1889. The late arrangements as to procedure had had the unexpected effect of introducing a prolongation of the debate upon the Address, which was one of the most striking changes in the conduct of the Lower House. The limitation which had been laid upon the rights of private members went hand-in-hand with the slackening of close party adhesion. Deprived of their time-honoured opportunities, and no longer satisfied to leave the duties of criticism to a few select leaders, private members took advantage of the debate on the Address to air their individual opinions on all sorts of subjects. In the present instance, among the many amendments one alone was of serious importance. It was that in which Mr. Morley (February 25) summed up in vigorous words the view taken of the existing administration by the Irish members and their friends: "The present system in Ireland is harsh, oppressive, and unjust, violates the rights, and alienates the affections of the Queen's Irish subjects, and is viewed with reprobation and aversion by the people of Great Britain." The discussion of this amendment occupied no less than five nights. In all that time scarcely anything new was said. All the well-known complaints against the Government were reiterated, and were met with the old defensive arguments. Perhaps the most effective weapon of the attack was the obliteration under the late Crimes Act of the distinction between offences committed under the name of political agitation and offences which were but the ordinary breaches of law. The defence relied chiefly on the assertion of the gradual improvement of the country. As a matter of course, the amendment was lost and led to nothing.

Meanwhile the Chief Secretary, Mr. Balfour, continued to carry

out consistently the plan, the success of which had, as he believed, justified him in taking credit for the improved condition of Ireland. The firm vindication of the law as laid down in the late Crimes Act was to go hand-in-hand with measures for the amelioration of the social condition of the country. To a superficial view there certainly appeared but little improvement in the feeling of the Irish towards England. Meetings were constantly proclaimed and broken up, and yet surreptitiously held; the "plan of campaign" was still pressed forward, and was producing in Tipperary a great conflict which reached its climax in the following year; there was still the same difficulty in obtaining evidence in prosecutions in favour of the Crown. Either intimidation or national feeling was so strong on this point, that one of the judges publicly declared that he only wondered how any one could be found to give evidence at all. But signs of a more hopeful future were not wanting. The Government had attempted to open out the resources of the country by Bills authorising great schemes of drainage and reclamation of waste lands, and setting on foot a system of light railways (August 27, 1889). The year was prosperous for agriculture; prices were good. The number of tenants purchasing their holdings under the Ashbourne Act was steadily increasing. The disturbed area was becoming more distinctly defined and isolated. Altogether, in spite of the intense friction still visible, there was so much real improvement in the general state of affairs, that it was found possible in January 1890 to relax in eleven counties the action of the Crimes Act.

Even the "plan of campaign" was ultimately brought into discredit with the people by the very violence with which it was pressed in Tipperary. The plan had there been applied on the Ponsonby estate. Exceedingly favourable terms had been offered to the tenants. The refusal of these terms seemed so unreasonable that certain landowners entered into an association for the purpose of supporting the landlord interest which they regarded as their own. One of the best landlords in Ireland, Mr. Smith Barry, put himself at the head of this association. The right of co-operation and joint action, which the Irish Nationalists had been the first to claim for themselves, appeared to them an unpardonable crime when employed by the landlords. They instructed the tenants not to pay rent to Mr. Smith Barry. The greater part of the town of Tipperary belonged to him, and he was obliged to have recourse to eviction. Induced by promises of assistance from the league, and persuaded of

**Social im-
provement in
Ireland.**

**"New
Tipperary."**

the final success of their movement, the tenants gave up their houses and shops, and all their regular means of livelihood, and moved into "new Tipperary," a long double row of sheds erected for them by the league, just outside the town. There, for the whole of the year 1890, they continued a wretched existence in the belief that the league would certainly assist them. But events soon occurred which touched the Irish leaders more closely than the sufferings of their Tipperary dupes; and at length, in May 1891, after public denunciations of the manner in which they had been deceived, the unhappy exiles approached their former landlord. They found him ready not only to receive their submission but to give them liberal terms; and they returned to their homes in old Tipperary, leaving their ruined shanties as a memorial of the complete failure of their misguided though heroic effort.

Although this was the most conspicuous contest of the year, there were others, such as that on the Glensharrold estate near Ardagh, almost as striking. Of this the chief interest lay in the gradually rising opposition of the heads of the Roman Catholic Church to the extreme forms of the Nationalist movement. The Pope had already given his verdict against it; and although the majority of the clergy were in sympathy with it, and confined their obedience to assuming an attitude of friendly neutrality, there were not wanting both priests and bishops who, following the conspicuous example of Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, condemned boycotting and refusal of rent in very outspoken language. But though the Church might condemn them, and unfortunate victims of the "plan of campaign" might suffer, the leaders persisted in their "no rent" policy, rendered more acceptable to the people by a threatened failure of the potato crop in August 1890. With equal persistency the Government pursued its course; the Irish leaders were duly apprehended, tried, and imprisoned.

The stormy trial of Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien in Tipperary, from which they had withdrawn forfeiting their bail, was scarcely ended when a catastrophe occurred, which affected primarily the private character of Mr. Parnell, but which in its consequences not only divided the Irish party, but even for the time seemed to paralyze the action of the Opposition in Parliament. A suit was brought in the Divorce Court by a well-known member of the Irish party, in which Mr. Parnell was the respondent. The Court pronounced its judgment in favour of the divorce (November 17, 1890).

Nationalists
condemned by
the Church.

Fall of Mr.
Parnell.

The circumstances which were brought to light in the trial were such as seemed to touch both the morality and the honour of Mr. Parnell. It became at once a question whether his political position could be retained, and whether the English Liberals could consent to work hand in hand with a party of which he was the leader. The first impression among the Irish was that Mr. Parnell's private character need not in any way affect his political position, and at several public meetings renewed confidence was expressed in his leadership, although a few voices, notably that of Mr. Michael Davitt, were raised to urge at least his temporary withdrawal from political life. In England there was a strong expression on the part of the Unionist papers that any further co-operation between the English Liberals and the Irish, led by a man with such a blot on his name, would be little short of disgraceful. From the Home Rule side on the other hand came the opinion that the great question depended upon principles of justice, and not on the personal character of the statesmen who supported it, and that it was not for England to dictate to the Irish as to the choice of the leader to whom they were willing to intrust their cause. It appeared at first as though Mr. Gladstone and his firm supporter, Mr. John Morley, were inclined to this opinion. But Mr. Gladstone's duty was to regard the question from the point of view of a great party leader engaged in attempting to give effect to measures which he and his followers believed to be of vital importance. He was bound to be influenced by the opinion of followers on whom alone he could rely for securing any practical result from his efforts; and the opinion of the Scottish Presbyterians and the English Nonconformists, of whom the bulk of his party consisted, was not long uncertain. They gave it to be understood with perfect clearness that they would not co-operate with the Irish if Mr. Parnell retained his leadership. And Mr. Gladstone, in the interest of Ireland itself and of the cause which he was advocating, could not but accept their opinion. To have defied it must have meant the immediate wreck of the Home Rule movement. He undoubtedly hoped that Mr. Parnell would himself see the difficulty, and would relieve his party from their danger by a voluntary resignation. In this sense he wrote a letter, and placed it in the hands of Mr. McCarthy, to be produced if necessary; that is, if Mr. Parnell did not resign voluntarily at the meeting of the Irish party, which would be held as usual at the beginning of the session.

Any hope of voluntary self-effacement on the part of Mr. Parnell was speedily dissipated. Before the second meeting of the party he

issued a manifesto, which virtually transformed the question into one of personal rivalry. The Irish were practically asked whether they would be led by Mr. Gladstone or by Mr. Parnell. To secure their favourable answer, assertions were made with respect to private conversations held between himself, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Morley, which, according to the Irish leader, limited in a disastrous manner the character of the Home Rule Bill which the Liberals were willing to support. And in addition to this, Mr. Parnell declared that proposals had been made to him to take office as Secretary for Ireland in case of the success of the Opposition at the next election. The assertions were categorically denied both by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Morley; and it was pointed out that, even if true, Mr. Parnell in making them had violated the sanctity of conversations in the highest degree confidential. A series of very stormy debates among the Irish party, held in Committee-room No. 15, followed. Efforts were made to procure a conference with Mr. Gladstone, and to pledge him to two at least of the points mentioned in the manifesto, to wring from him an assertion that, in any future Home Rule Bill, the constabulary and the settlement of the land question should be left to the Irish Parliament. Although Mr. Gladstone consented (December 5) to receive the Irish deputation, he refused to commit himself. He took up the position that the question at present was not one concerning the form of the Home Rule Bill, but entirely one of leadership, and that therefore its decision rested with the Irish alone. Mr. Parnell, who still remained chairman of the Irish meetings, fought bitterly and with great ability for the retention of his position against a large majority backed now by the strong influence of the Roman Catholic Church. In face of his personal opposition it was found impossible to take a vote as to his leadership, but on the 6th of December the question was decided by forty-five members walking out of the Committee-room, leaving Mr. Parnell with but twenty-six followers. The majority, thus definitely breaking away from their old leader, chose Mr. Justin McCarthy in his place, with the title of Sessional Chairman.

Parnell's
manifesto,
Nov. 29, 1890.

Great efforts were naturally made to prevent the entire dissolution of the party. Mr. W. O'Brien and Mr. Dillon, both of whom had been tried and convicted in the autumn, but had escaped to America, now came to Boulogne to attempt some arrangement with Mr. Parnell. Their efforts failed, and in February 1891 they returned to London to undergo their term of imprisonment. The actual issues on which the discussion rested were

Efforts to re-
organise the
Irish party.

not known. Mr. McCarthy asserted, in a Report produced at a subsequent Anti-Parnellite meeting, that Mr. Gladstone had stated as his view, that the land question must either be settled simultaneously with the granting of Home Rule, or be left to the Irish Parliament, under whose authority the police might also pass after an interval of a few years. With this statement Mr. McCarthy and his followers were satisfied, but Mr. Parnell demanded a written assurance that both questions should be unreservedly left to the Irish legislature. It seems however more probable that the real subject of the Boulogne discussions was the leadership of the party. The attitude taken up by the Roman Catholic hierarchy was so threatening that the Anti-Parnellites may well have thought that the safety of the Irish cause required the retirement of Mr. Parnell. Mr. Dillon indeed declared subsequently that he would have been satisfied had he promised to withdraw for six months only.

On the failure of the Boulogne negotiations, the struggle between the parties assumed a character of great virulence in Ireland. Language (as is not unusual in that country) of the most intemperate character was used on both sides. Mr. Parnell, breaking loose from all restraint, declared the pleasure he felt in his emancipation from servitude to English statesmen, and openly advocated separation. Neither he nor his opponents were scrupulous in the use of personalities. He stigmatised those who had seceded from him as "feeble, cowardly, and traitorous." On the other side Mr. Maurice Healy described him as "an unapproachable trickster, not only a libertine and a liar, but a cowardly sneak," and declared that "any person attempting to patch up the present difference by a compromise on the basis of his leadership should be hunted out of the country with a kettle tied to his tail." Mr. Parnell did not wholly lose his popularity, but his opponents, supported by the full weight of the priestly influence, were too strong for him. He lost much by his refusal to produce the accounts of the National League, and the cause as a whole suffered severely by the entire collapse of the New Tipperary scheme, where the unfortunate tenants were left deserted amid the struggles of their leaders. The issue of the contest

**Death of
Parnell, Oct.
1891.**

was however still uncertain, when the unexpected death of Mr. Parnell, in October 1891, withdrew the personal element from it, and the party settled down in two sections, the one under Mr. McCarthy, the other under Mr. Parnell's trusty follower, Mr. John Redmond.

The break-up of the Irish party was of great political importance. The Opposition, with their Irish allies, and aided largely by

mismanagement on the part of the Government, had succeeded in throwing obstacles in the way of most of the proposed legislation; an autumn session had again been found necessary, and a continued struggle had been expected. But the Irish disputes had so entirely disorganised the party, that in less than a fortnight two of the retarded Bills were pushed forward almost without opposition to the Committee stage, which was all that the Government had contemplated.

Of these, the most important was the long-promised Land Purchase Bill, which had been introduced by Mr. Balfour on March 24, 1890. In the amelioration of the Irish land laws there were two great branches, and two proposed methods of cure: the one, the improvement of the relation between landlord and tenant; the other, the removal of the landlord and the establishment of the small farmer as a freeholder. It was the first of these methods which Mr. Gladstone had attempted. His Bills of 1870 and 1881 were directed to the establishment, legalisation, and regulation of the interest of the tenant in his holding; an interest acknowledged in different degrees in various parts of Ireland, and finding its most complete form in the Ulster tenant right. The Liberal party had however not been blind to the question of purchase; various attempts had been made to foster it, especially by what are known as "the Bright clauses." To the Unionists, on the other hand, the removal of the dual ownership and the substitution of the single proprietary right of small landowners appeared the true method of cure. Only the very extreme Nationalists desired the compulsory expropriation of the landlords. Mr. Gladstone certainly desired their retention, at all events in sufficient numbers to form a leading class. Recognising the losses which his legislation had inevitably brought upon them, he felt considerable sympathy with them. He was well aware also that the Irish Nationalists were on the whole decidedly favourable to a very wide extension of the freeholding class, and he could not but dread the probability of violent measures to secure this result in any exclusively Irish Parliament. It is indeed difficult to believe that his legislation for the extension and settlement of the tenant's interest, the establishment by statute of what is known as dual ownership, was intended to be permanent; it seems rather as though he was attempting to supply the tenant with something to sell in order to render possible some sort of arrangement for the mutual advantage of landlord and tenant. However this may be, he certainly did not feel it right to place the landlords at the mercy of an Irish Parliament, and his great Land Purchase Bill in 1886 had been directed

**The Land Purchase Bill,
March 1890.**

to the object of allowing those landlords who disliked the changes in prospect, to free themselves from their disadvantageous position. That Bill was too closely connected with the Home Rule Bill to have any chance of success. But the greatness of its object, and its complete harmony in principle though not in detail with the agrarian policy both of the League and of the bulk of the Conservatives, should be distinctly recognised. The subsequent legislation of the Unionists with respect to land had been avowedly temporary, and had been directed to produce more gradually and by somewhat different methods the same result, that is to say, a peasant proprietary. Upon these lines was framed the Land Purchase Bill, which Mr. Balfour, according to the long-delayed promise of his party, introduced in March 1890. It was a Bill of singular cleverness, with clauses showing much real sympathy for the wants of the Irish people, and elaborate, perhaps over-elaborate, ingenuity in the system of checks and counter-checks by which the liability of the English taxpayer was guarded.

In any scheme of the sort which could possibly obtain the adherence of the imperial Parliament two things were necessary, the absence of compulsory expropriation of landlords, and the employment of British credit without any great risk to the taxpayer. It was thus a first principle of the Bill that all purchases made under it were to be by voluntary agreement between the landlord and the tenant. Many previous difficulties had been caused by the variety and number of the Courts and Departments involved, these were now to be superseded by one Central Department. To this Department was left the settlement of all disputes as to the price to be paid by the purchaser, with the limitation that under no circumstances was it to allow more than twenty years' purchase of the net rental; that is to say, the gross rental, deducting the average amount paid in rates and taxes by the landlord. This was a considerable diminution of the basis on which rent was to be fixed, as compared to that authorised under the Ashbourne Act; on many small holdings where the landlord was obliged to pay the Poors' rate, the deduction approached a third of the rent. The process of acquisition on the part of the purchaser was then simplified. As soon as the Land Department had authorised the purchase, the land became the absolute property of the purchaser without further legal question. The whole of the price, limited as explained above, was to be advanced by England, and to be paid to the seller by a holding in a new funded loan established for the purpose, paying him 2½ per cent., and redeemable at par in thirty years. The safe repayment of this advance was the

**Details of the
Land Purchase
Bill.**

second great point in the Bill. As under the Ashbourne Act, the purchaser was to repay the advance by an annuity. The payments were to consist of 4 per cent. on the purchase money and were to continue for forty-nine years. Of this sum, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. represented the interest due to the seller, 1 per cent. formed a sinking fund, and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. went to the local authorities for the building and improvement of labourers' cottages. As an additional security, the tenants were to pay for the first five years $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. beyond the proper annuity. This surplus, which was credited to them in the later instalments, meanwhile formed an insurance fund to meet default of payments in bad seasons.

The adequacy of the repayment was secured by many intricate arrangements. The main principle was that any default should be met from that share of the revenue which was derived from licences, and from a portion of the probate duties which were paid to Ireland by the imperial Exchequer. Should these prove insufficient, a contingent guarantee was found in the rates on Government property and in the imperial contributions to education and to the Poor Law, money over which the Government had control. The whole capitalised value of the guarantee funds was calculated at £33,000,000; and this was the sum to which advances were limited. It was believed that the advances would only be required gradually, and that the money would be thus capable of use over and over again.

A further difficulty in the solution of the Irish land question arose from the irregular distribution of the inhabitants. **The Congested District Board.** There were certain districts, especially in the west, where the population was so thick and the holdings so small, that no system of purchase could afford relief. The people practically lived upon their earnings as labourers elsewhere, and were in no sense dependent on the land; and it was here that the greatest amount of poverty was found. These districts were to be withdrawn from the general scheme and placed under the management of a special Board, known as the Congested District Board, to which large powers were intrusted. It was charged with the duty of amalgamating small holdings, aiding fisheries and emigration, and of giving instruction in such industries as fish-curing, agriculture, and woollen work. The final guarantee for the expenses of this Board was to be the surplus of the Irish Church Fund.

That the Bill should meet with opposition from the Irish Nationalists was almost a matter of course. They had indeed constantly clamoured for schemes of purchase; but now **Opposition to the Bill.**

they raised the cry that this scheme was quite inadequate, that the sum advanced would not touch more than a fourth of the country, that the suggested instalments being at least 20 per cent. lower than the existing rent was a plain confession that rents were at least that much too high, and that in fact the real intention of the Bill was to raise the selling value of land by a side wind, so as to allow the worst and wealthier landlords to leave the country on good terms. Mr. Parnell, when opposing the second reading of the Bill (April 21, 1890), declared that the Irish would not accept it, and suggested as an alternative the lowering of rents, compensating the landlords for their loss for a certain number of years, but leaving them after that time to receive the lessened revenue from their property. The ground of opposition on the part of the English Liberals is not so clear. Mr. Gladstone, who spoke with apparent moderation, found not without reason many small objections; but the four great objections which he declared were such as to prevent him from supporting the Bill do not carry conviction. They were in fact political. The first fatal point was the opposition of Ireland, he could not consent to force such a measure upon an unwilling people; he considered that the landlords had such effective means of coercion, that the bargains contemplated could not be voluntary; he pointed out the evils of substituting the State for the landlord, apparently forgetful that his own Bill had contemplated a closely similar process; and he declined to pledge the credit of England without a fresh appeal to the people, believing them to have expressed their opinion against such a step at the last general election. The evil influence exerted by party government upon Irish questions was again exhibited with startling clearness. On a question which from its difficulty and its national character demanded the co-operation of wise men from all sides, the joint opposition succeeded in so hampering the Government that the Bill was withdrawn and relegated to an autumn session, when, as already mentioned, circumstances allowed it to be pushed forward without difficulty.

The Bill was in Committee from April 10, 1891, to the 14th of May. In this stage it met with no undue obstruction, but, on the contrary, as Mr. Balfour gratefully acknowledged, received much assistance from the Irish members. It was finally read a third time on the 15th of June, and carried by a large majority. It passed through the House of Lords without difficulty, and received the royal assent at the end of July.

The effect which the measure would have on the permanent settlement of Ireland was of course as yet a mere matter of speculation;

**Land Purchase
Bill passed,
July 1891.**

but there were clear signs that Mr. Balfour's administration, in spite of the uproar it had raised, had been effective. In part no doubt he had received assistance from the **Crimes Act relaxed.** agricultural distress which had fallen upon the country at the close of 1890, since it gave him the opportunity of showing the real sympathy which lay behind the severity of his action; in part also he had been assisted by the private disputes of the Irish Parliamentary leaders, whose humbler followers in Ireland labouring under a sense of desertion were more disposed to accept conciliatory measures. The result at all events was satisfactory; for Mr. Balfour was able to declare in Parliament (June 5, 1891) that the time had arrived for relaxing the action of the coercive clauses of the Crimes Act, that they might now be safely removed from all Ireland with the exception of one county, and a few outlying baronies.

The second Bill which the break-up of the Opposition allowed Government to push forward was the Tithes Bill. **The Tithes Bill.** Tithes are always a burning question, and they had lately produced formidable riots in Wales, where Nonconformity is strong. A Bill to secure their more certain collection had been introduced, but withdrawn in 1889. A considerable number of the suggestions made by the Opposition when the former Bill was before Parliament were incorporated in the new Tithe Bill of 1890; nevertheless it was bitterly opposed. Based upon the assumption that the tithes belonged to the Church, it immediately touched the Nonconformists. More indirectly it crossed that tendency towards Socialism, or perhaps more properly Collectivism, which, whether expressed or latent, had for some time been visible among the Radicals. In their view, the tithe was a national property, and could be used for other cognate purposes as well as the maintenance of the Church. But perhaps the most genuine dislike of tithes was felt by those, whether Churchmen or Nonconformists, who had to pay them; and this feeling undoubtedly originated in misapprehension of what the tithes were and what would be the result of abolishing them. The farmers did not see that the tithes were a burden upon land, and that, although the payments were actually made by the tenants, it was the landlords who practically met the charge, and that the landlords alone would benefit if tithes were abolished. The proposed Bill at all events cleared up the question, by making the landlords themselves answerable for the payment of the tithes. But as it recognised that tithes were private property not applicable to general purposes, that the proprietor in the main was the Church of England,

unwillingly yielded step by step, and finally, on the 26th of June, though still maintaining a slight majority on divisions, found it necessary to withdraw their plan. They contented themselves with handing over the money raised by the enhanced duty on spirits to the County Councils without condition but with a strongly worded intimation that they were expected to use it for educational purposes until such time as a definite scheme of technical education was called into existence. The Local Taxation Bill, in which this amendment was embodied, was carried on August 5, 1890.

The Government had entered upon office with the declared intention of carrying out social reforms. Their actual achievements with one exception were not large. On the great question pending between capital and labour they had confined themselves to the appointment of a commission of inquiry; while their efforts to improve the position of the agricultural labourer had been limited to a measure giving power to local authorities to negotiate with landowners for the purchase of land to be let in allotments. The occupation of such allotments unquestionably added to the amenities of the life of workmen resident in towns, and was not without result in rendering the position of the agricultural labourer more tolerable. But it fell far short of satisfying the hope largely entertained that means might be found of giving the labourer such an interest in the land as might prevent him from joining the ever-increasing stream of migration to the towns.

On one point however a really great step in advance was taken, the opportunity having been afforded by the favourable condition of the finances. On April 23, 1891, Mr. Goschen announced a surplus of £2,000,000, and declared that it might well be applied to the establishment of free education. His declaration had already been foreshadowed in the Queen's speech (January 22, 1891), "Your attention will be invited to the expediency of alleviating the burden which compulsory education has in recent years imposed upon the poorer portions of my people." When once education had been made compulsory it was certain that sooner or later it must be made free; the State had practically undertaken the training of the children of the nation, and to oblige parents to pay for it against their will was neither logical nor in the long run possible. Many Liberals had for years believed that the step now suggested was a necessary one. Nor had this belief been confined to the Opposition; it was shared by Mr.

Spirit duties
to be used for
Technical
Education.

Allotment Act,
April 1891.

Free Educa-
tion, July 1891.

Chamberlain and by many members of the Unionist party. The proposal therefore met with general favour. Such opposition as it encountered came chiefly from the Conservatives. There were many, and among them men most deeply interested in the cause of education, who regarded it with apprehension. To lessen the responsibilities of the parent appeared to them a questionable advantage. It seemed to them to be only another step towards that system of State socialism, the rapid advance of which was threatening to undermine the independence of personal character, and to weaken, by reliance on the State, that robust strength which is produced by the necessity for individual effort. To these very reasonable objections was added the fear felt by many Conservatives that an even-handed distribution of State aid to denominational and undenominational schools would be sure to excite opposition, and would eventually lead to the triumph of the Board schools. The feeling in favour of the Bill was however very general; it was carried without difficulty and became law, July 24, 1891. It authorised the payment by the State of 10s. a year for the education of every child between the ages of 5 and 15 who made the required number of attendances at either a Board or Denominational school. The contribution was calculated upon the ordinary fee of about 3*d.* a week. There were however many schools at which the fee was higher; a provision was therefore made to allow the continuance of the excess fee in these schools, deducting the 3*d.* paid by Government.

English primary education is still far from perfect; it is still open to the very serious charge of being directed to no definite and well-understood end, and of wanting that elasticity which is requisite to secure its application to varying circumstances of time and place. But it was undoubtedly a great step forward when a hardship was removed which was felt by a very large class of people, and which furnished an argument of real cogency to those who either from carelessness or ignorance of its value objected to the compulsory education of children. Theoretically the Bill marks the acceptance in the fullest sense by the State of the responsibility of training its future citizens in the first rudiments of culture.

The Parliament was approaching its termination, it was practically

**Preparations
for general
election, Sept.
1891.**

certain that a dissolution would be necessary before the autumn of 1892. Already therefore the rival parties were making preparation for a general election, and whatever assertions were made, or measures introduced, must be regarded from that point of view. The most definite compendium of

the policy of the Liberals is to be found in the Resolutions of the National Liberal Federation which assembled at Newcastle in September 1891. At the head of the list, as was inevitable considering the views of the party leader, stood Home Rule. Beyond this, after the payment of Members and the creation of Parish Councils, the greatest stress was laid upon the disestablishment of the Welsh Church. Mr. Gladstone's support of such a measure exposed him to considerable obloquy and to the charge of sacrificing principle to the exigencies of party. Yet it was in strict accordance with the general trend of his policy that Wales should be regarded as a separate nationality, and with his previous utterances as to the Scotch Church, that the voice of the large majority of its representatives in favour of disestablishment should demand consideration. At the same time it cannot be questioned that the promise of such a step as even partial Church Disestablishment held out a strong inducement to the Nonconformists to support the Liberal party.

But perhaps the more significant part of the programme was the attention given to the claims of the agricultural labourers. From the time of their complete enfranchisement, their weight in party politics had been well understood. On the first occasion on which they had used their vote the result had been by no means in accordance with the general expectation. Both parties now felt the necessity of securing the Agricultural vote in the County elections. The result was a somewhat undignified competition, in which Conservative and Liberal attempted to outbid each other in their promises. It was thought advisable by the Liberals to hold a Conference of villagers in London. It was held on the 10th of December, and was honestly representative. Some 400 delegates attended. Naturally enough the views of such a meeting had little to do with imperial questions. The chief complaints were the usurped authority of the clergy, the quantity of land which was kept out of cultivation for the sake of sport or pleasure, and the high rents at which allotments were let. The chief demands were the establishment of Parish Councils which should have control of the land, the schools and the charities, as well as some other less important items such as rights of way, which had already been suggested as within their competence; and that the members of the Councils to whom these powers were given should be elected by ballot on the "one man one vote" system. They made it clearly understood that their business was quite as important as Home Rule, and should not be postponed for it. To complete the operation, Mr. Gladstone

Liberal meeting of agriculturists.

met the delegates at a breakfast at the Holborn Restaurant. He there expressed a general approval of their propositions, but coupled it with a firm protest against their complaints of the squire and the parson. He further suggested that the Parish Council should lease rather than buy land; their rents, the duration of their tenure, and their general independence would thus be more completely in their own hands, while the difficulty of raising the money requisite for purchase would be removed.

The Conservatives thought it necessary to follow this example, and summoned a meeting of rural representatives, chiefly from the eastern counties, to be held at Ely, in January 1892. The complaints at the meeting were much of the same character, but the necessity of old age pensions was brought more prominently forward. To Mr. Chaplin, the Minister of Agriculture, fell the duty of explaining the intentions of the Government. He mentioned as points likely to be considered, the increase of small holdings, the improvement of cottages, and the establishment of District rather than Parish Councils. Allotments could, he thought, always be obtained by voluntary agreement, and as the land given was good and convenient, they must expect to pay high rent for it. With regard to old age pensions he said that any scheme adopted must be such as would not injure the great benefit societies. But the real point of his speech was strictly political. Both parties being desirous in their own ways of improving the labourer's position, which, he asked, was the most likely to fulfil their promises, the Conservatives who had always shown interest in the agricultural poor, or the Liberals who were determined to postpone all English legislation until the impossible question of Ireland was settled?

The session of 1892 opened under somewhat new circumstances. The death of the Duke of Devonshire had raised his son Lord Hartington to the peerage and deprived his party in the Lower House of his weighty and sensible leadership. The Liberal Unionists found in Mr. Chamberlain a leader of a wholly different complexion. Vehement and aggressive in speech, Radical in many of his views, and of a very practical mind, Mr. Chamberlain was gifted with that faith in himself, and that determination to bring to a realisation the object he had in view which together constitute a first-rate party man. On the other hand he was not, like his predecessor, secure of his position, he had to make it for himself. A certain quiet dignity therefore which had marked Lord Hartington, was in his case wanting; and there was always a

Conservative meeting of agri-culturists.

Changes in the House, Jan. 1892.

probability that if he found his objects fairly advanced by the Conservative Government he might shrink from a lengthened exclusion from office, and find means to join his former opponents. Meanwhile, the influence of the party under his guidance continued to be very marked. The leadership of the House had also passed into different hands, Mr. W. H. Smith, the incarnation of solid good sense, had died in the autumn of 1891, and with general approbation one of the youngest members of the Cabinet, Mr. Arthur Balfour, had resigned the Irish Secretaryship where his work had been so striking, and had accepted the position of First Lord of the Treasury with the management of the House.

Although thus removed from the Irish administration, where his place was taken by Mr. Jackson (February 18, 1892), Mr. Balfour thought it right himself to introduce the Irish Local
Government
Bill. Bill for Irish Local Government which was to represent the Unionist view of what Home Rule might mean, and to fulfil that promise of similar treatment of England and Ireland, which ever since 1886 had been waiting its fulfilment. Introduced with a somewhat strange show of carelessness and want of interest, the Bill contained provisions which the Irish Party could scarcely fail to regard as insulting. It showed throughout a profound disbelief in the honesty of the people to whom it intrusted power. It proposed to create County Councils, with certain administrative duties, and also Baronial Councils, answering to what were known in England as District Councils. But the gift which seemed so generous was fenced about by restrictions which deprived it of all its value. All judicial duties were still to be left in the hands of the grand juries. The police was left as before. Even the limited duties intrusted to the County Councils were guarded by strict conditions. Not only were the County Councils themselves hampered by the presence of four nominee members, but all expenditure on roads or new offices or similar matters was to be subject in every county to the approbation of a joint committee of fifteen members, only seven of whom were to be nominated by the County Council. The presence of the Sheriff as an *ex-officio* member and of seven members nominated by the grand jury secured a majority to the representatives of the Administration. Nor was this all. By a clause which excited great anger, twenty ratepayers might petition the judges to remove any County or Baronial Council on the ground of oppression or corruption. Any two judges might try the case, and if they found the Council guilty might remove it, its powers being then transferred

to the Lord Lieutenant. Such restrictions might have been necessary; but if so, it seemed hardly judicious to establish Local Government at all, or to place any power in the hands of men so evidently mis-trusted. There can be little doubt that Mr. Balfour had no faith in his own scheme. He declared in fact that he regarded it as of much less importance than the Criminal Law Procedure Act, or the Railway Act, or the Congested Districts Act, or the Land Purchase Act. It is indeed known that it was introduced to satisfy the demands of the Liberal Unionists. It was also no doubt desirable, in view of the coming elections, that the Ministerial candidates should be able to assert that the Government promises had been fulfilled. It was found impossible, perhaps it was never intended, to pass the Bill during the session. At the same time it was, as Mr. Gladstone said, and as Mr. Balfour admitted, of great use in clearing the air, and showing how far the Government was inclined to go.

Mr. Chaplin was more successful in his promised Bill in favour of **Small Holdings Bill.** Its intention was primarily to keep the people on the land. It empowered County Councils to borrow a sum not involving a charge of more than a penny per pound upon the rates, for the purpose of buying land for small holdings of from one to fifty acres. Objection was made to the want of compulsory powers of purchase, but the Bill passed and became law (June 21, 1892).

With the exception of a few other Bills of no great importance, nothing else was completed. The business of the House was rapidly wound up, and in June the necessary dissolution took place.

The issue on which the battle of the elections was to be fought was, except in the one great point, somewhat confused. **Questions at issue at the elections.** Mr. Balfour's want of interest in his own Irish Local Government Bill, and the list of measures which he declared to be of more importance, indicate the different temper in which the two parties approached the questions of the time. Apart from a certain amount of personal and class prejudice it would be foolish to doubt the genuine interest felt by both in the improvement of the condition of Ireland and of the English working classes. But while the Liberals sought the cure largely in the concession of political rights, the Conservatives sought it in the immediate practical correction of recognised evils. It is usual to speak of the Liberals as being unduly moved by sentiment, and as mischievously eager to call into action legislative intervention. The charge can scarcely be substantiated, or must at least be shared by their opponents. There

is no doubt that Mr. Gladstone was on one point strongly moved by sentiment; intense sympathy with national aspirations, and an overwhelming belief that the first duty of England was to cure, as it had caused, the woes of Ireland, had become the single motive power of his political action. But in other respects, both sentiment and a readiness to accept legislative interference seem to have been fairly distributed in the two parties. The desire for imperial self-assertion and the pity for the sufferings of the poor which prevailed among the Conservatives were as truly sentiments as any which actuated the Liberals. There was no lack of sentimental horror among the Conservatives when what they considered as the greatness of the country or that prestige which they loved so dearly was touched; the mere unfounded suggestion that the Liberals were inclined to bring the occupation of Egypt to an end seemed likely to ruin the prospects of the Opposition. Nor was there any lack of readiness to sanction legislative action in favour of the well-being of the working-man; indeed, the principle of State socialism was even more obvious in the Unionist ranks than in those of the Opposition. On the other hand, the Liberals were upon certain points not only free from sentiment but were commonly charged with being "doctrinaire." It was from their ranks that the firmest protest issued against tampering even in the slightest degree with the policy of free-trade; they denounced, resting their denunciations upon the theoretical doctrines of political economy, all ideas of reciprocity or of preferential duties for the sake of colonial interests; and it was they who attempted to prove the nugatory character of any scheme of old age pension.

It is interesting to observe Lord Salisbury's attitude with regard to these two questions which were prominently before the public. He apparently had some sympathy for the Lord Salisbury's views. mistrust of free-trade so generally felt among his followers. He certainly gave utterance to words which seemed to imply the possibility at all events of some measure of a slightly protective character. One of his arguments in favour of the increase of British dominions was found in the possible necessity of finding in home markets the chief extension of commerce, and when pointing out the refusal of all nations except England to accept free-trade, he certainly used words which could be and were largely interpreted as a hint that reciprocity might be necessary. But Lord Salisbury, who believed apparently in the inevitable character of development, and therefore preferred to follow rather than attempt to mould the tendencies of the time, was at all events firm on the other question. Intervention

between employer and employed he constantly denounced ; and while favouring any arrangements which could improve the physical condition of the poor, he set his face constantly against the belief that the poor man would find any real advantage in adventitious assistance, declaring that his hope must rest on his own character and his own thrift.

Thus, when the General Election came on in July, except on one great point the line dividing the parties was not very **Dividing line** easy of definition. The difference lay rather in the **of parties.** temper and spirit in which questions were approached than in the questions themselves, more in the personal confidence inspired by the leaders than in the actual measures they promised to produce. There can be no question as to the real desire of all parties to ameliorate the condition of the poor. But real trust in the working-man and the belief that if privileges were given him he would use them well, which were largely felt by the more advanced Liberals, found but little place in the Conservative ranks. With them the ideas of wealth and of influence were inseparable. It was charitable sentiment rather than a sense of justice which urged them to social reforms. Political questions were treated in the same temper. The assertion of the rights and privileges of the upper and propertied classes, and the importance of giving due weight to wealth, are everywhere visible. If, as was now inevitable, democratic forms were necessary, it was the propertied District Council and not the working-men in their Parish Council who should be charged with local duties. If again Lord Salisbury and his friends were strongly opposed to the principle involved in the formula "one man one vote," it was because it entailed a loss of the influence due to the possession of property in several different constituencies. In the same way with regard to the House of Lords ; as the representatives of property, in Conservative eyes the peers possessed and ought to possess large constitutional power. It had been declared, and Lord Salisbury had accepted the declaration, that although it was neither possible nor right for the House of Lords to refuse to listen to the clearly expressed desire of the nation, it was its right and its duty to insist upon such a definite issue being placed before the nation. The expressed will of the nation was no doubt too strong to be resisted ; but it must be a definitely expressed wish embodied in a detailed Bill ; a vague mandate interpreted by a Ministry could have no such coercive weight. Thus in the present instance, if Mr. Gladstone declined to give the details of his proposed Home Rule Bill and came into power and then produced them, it was the duty of the Lords to throw it out and to force a dissolution, so that

not the principle merely but the definite Bill should be before the constituencies. Roughly, on the one side was ranged property and orthodoxy, on the other democracy and nonconformity.

The one overwhelming question to be settled was still the Irish question. Beyond that there were Welsh disestablishment, and social questions regarded from the different points of view which have been roughly indicated.

Signs of
Liberal
reaction.

Judging by the bye-elections there had already been a distinct turn in the tide. Mr. Gladstone had openly avowed his inability at his age to undertake more than the one great reform on which he was bent. But apart from Ireland, the people were returning to their allegiance to the Liberal party. The belief that more was to be gained in the way of reform and improvement from a Liberal than from a Conservative Government was reasserting itself. To this is to be added the inevitable reaction which seems to govern the ebb and flow of parties, the desire to try what men now excluded from office for six years would do, and the inevitable disappointment which waits on any long-lived Government from its failure to satisfy the hopes under which it had gained its majority. Political gratitude is one of the weakest of motives; it was in vain to speak of the Local Government Act or of Free Education, while still further advances seemed obtainable from a change of Ministry. Yet the result of the whole election was not so great as had been expected. Mr. Gladstone had always said that to handle the Irish question properly the Government which undertook the work must have a working majority

General
election, July
1892.

exclusive of the Irish. He had hoped from the signs given at bye-elections that such would now be the case. When the result of the elections became known, and the Liberal majority was found to be no more than 40 including the 81 Irish Nationalists it was plain that the desired condition had not been reached, and that a large and free handling of the Irish question would be impossible. As the Opposition commanded a clear majority if the Gladstonians and Irish voted together, it became a question whether Lord Salisbury should at once resign, or should again meet Parliament as Prime Minister. He preferred the latter course, and in so doing was certainly justified by the state of parties. The change of opinion in England, as shown in the late elections, was not sufficient to render his resignation necessary.

The speech from the throne with which, on the 8th of August, the session was opened was of the briefest character. The Liberal Lords were thus unexpectedly in a position to avoid discussion, and refrained

from moving any amendment on the Address. But though the Address was adopted in the Upper House without a division, both Lord Salisbury and the Duke of Devonshire took the opportunity of expressing in strong words their view of the crisis, and called upon the House to resist with all their strength any attempt that might be made to deprive the Peers of their constitutional right of an equal voice in legislation, for now, if ever, it was upon them that the future of the country depended.

It was of course in the House of Commons that the fate of the Ministry had to be decided. Their retention of power, after the verdict of the late election, was vindicated by the argument that if the Irish party, whose opinion was a matter of certainty, was left out of sight, the mandate given to the Unionist Government in 1886 to oppose Home Rule had not been withdrawn by the constituencies, and that they could not yield to anything less than a hostile vote of the House. Such a vote was not long delayed; Mr. Asquith almost immediately moved a vote of want of confidence. In speaking in support of it, the leaders of both branches of the Irish party emphasised their position as holding the balance in the House. They stated the demands of Ireland, and declared that unless the Home Rule Bill answered those demands they would assuredly vote against it. Mr. Gladstone was not however to be induced to give any detailed declaration of policy. He declared that the attempt to analyse the majority, and to speak of the Irish majority as if it were different from the majority of the United Kingdom, was a gross breach of the true spirit of national union. He stigmatised the Coercion Act as "an effort, not to punish crime, but to secure the collection of rent." He admitted that some good measures had been passed, but complained that others far more important introduced by the Opposition had been rejected. These rejected Bills might be taken as the programme of the Liberals. They included "the appointment of District Councils and Parish Councils, the placing of the police and the licensing under the County Councils, the adoption of local option, the application of the principle of religious equality to Scotland and Wales, the shortening of Parliaments, the payment of members, the amendment of registration, the establishment of what is called 'one man one vote,' the equalisation of the death duties, and many more such proposals." Turning to Irish affairs, he declared with much solemnity, "The question of Ireland is to me personally almost everything. It is almost, if not altogether, my sole link with public

Opening of
Parliament,
Aug. 8.

Vote of Want
of Confidence.

life. It has been my primary and absorbing interest for the last six or seven years, and so it will continue till the end."

The division (August 11, 1892) was of course on strict party lines; the Government were defeated by a majority of 40, and at once resigned.

Resignation of the Ministry.

The retiring Government had been fortunate in possessing in Lord Salisbury a Foreign Minister of unusual ability. Although from time to time voices of disapproval had been raised by the Opposition, his foreign policy had throughout his tenure of office met with general commendation. That the Premier should undertake the onerous duties of the Foreign Office was unusual; but though the arrangement had been much criticised, it had proved a good one; for the circumstances of Europe were such as to require the surrender of old party traditions; and although there were no superlatively great and critical questions at issue, there were several complicated matters needing tactful handling and necessitating concessions, and an amount of give and take which no authority less than that of the Premier could have rendered palatable to his followers. The idea of imperialism had taken considerable hold upon the public mind. It was as yet very undefined, and ranging from the aggressive self-assertion which is stigmatised as Jingoism, up to the wise appreciation of the national responsibility towards the outlying portions of the empire. The unity of the empire had no doubt been much emphasised in the Home Rule discussions, but the recognition of its importance was by no means a monopoly of the Unionists. If the imperial position of Great Britain had again and again been emphasised by Mr. Chamberlain, the other side of the question, the mutual responsibility of Great Britain and its colonies, had found an eloquent exponent in Lord Rosebery. He had pointed out the change which was taking place under the influence of wide colonisation, and the probability that future causes of war would be found rather in the disputes of distant colonies than in Europe. From this he drew the conclusion that while it was just to demand from the colonies assistance for imperial defence, it followed as a necessary consequence that they should have some voice in the foreign policy of the empire. It was indeed obviously just that the colonies, endowed as they were with a system of the widest self-government, should assist in their own defence. The principle had been already accepted, and they had contributed towards the expense of works necessary to render their coasts and harbours secure. It could hardly be expected that they would

Foreign policy of the retiring Ministry.

continue their assistance without receiving some share in the government. There was a strong feeling that the loosely joined limbs of the empire must be linked more closely to the centre of political life.

From his first accession to office, Lord Salisbury had made it evident that he had no intention of upholding that self-asserting form of imperialism which Lord Beaconsfield had been inclined to favour. His positive mind saved him from the dangers of imaginative statesmanship, his deep-seated love of peace made him press diplomatic methods to their furthest extreme in order to avoid war. It has been mentioned that in the matter of the Afghan boundary and in the Eastern question he had frankly adopted the views of his predecessors, even though modifications of the Berlin Treaty were at stake. He allowed the formation of a united Bulgaria, and upheld the influence of the concert of Europe, the creation of which had been the great work of Lord Granville. His action indeed was such as to merit and obtain the full approbation of the Opposition. But there was a concert of Europe of a different sort and for a different object, to which the relation of England had to be considered. The great war of 1871 had left France and Germany in a state of scarcely suppressed antagonism. To secure his country from the revenge of the French, and to maintain the general peace of Europe, Bismarck had used all his ability to isolate France, and to combine Europe directly or indirectly in a great league against it. He had been largely successful. A triple alliance had been formed between Germany, Austria, and Italy. Russia had been secured by a secret treaty of neutrality, and an arrangement between Italy and England, in 1887, for securing the *status quo* in the Mediterranean had gone far to complete the isolation of France. Conditions such as these tended no doubt to the maintenance of European peace, but did not conduce to calm the passions of the country on which they were forced. The re-establishment of their influence became a fixed idea among the French.

As a further assurance of peace, the nations of Europe were adopting the somewhat strange measure of maintaining gigantic armaments. The received principle of the time was that peace was best maintained by preparation for war. Avowedly in fact there was the deepest mistrust among the various countries, and each thought it necessary to be in a condition to repel with certainty a possible invasion. Even in England the doctrine found acceptance, and though its insular position rendered such vast

Lord Salisbury
as Foreign
Minister.

European
Armaments.

armies as were kept up abroad unnecessary to it, its corresponding weapon of defence, the fleet, demanded a similar enormous increase.

In the year 1888 attention had been drawn to the condition of the navy, especially by Lord Charles Beresford and Mr. Brasse^y, while Lord Wolseley had subjected the con-^{increase of the navy.} dition of the army to a searching and bitter criticism. At the time, with that optimism which is inherent in Governments, all was declared admirable, and Lord Wolseley had to submit to a severe reprimand from Lord Salisbury ; but a year's meditation seemed to bring home to the Government the truth of the charges made. For when the estimates for the army and navy were produced in March 1889, they were accompanied with an elaborate plan for an increase to the navy of no less than 70 ships, at a cost of £21,000,000. Of this, £10,000,000 was to be paid by instalments spread over four years, and the remainder was to make its appearance in a yearly increase of the estimates. There was naturally some opposition to so large an expenditure, and much technical criticism of the sort of ships the Government proposed to build. It was urged that so lengthened a programme was likely to stereotype inferior forms of vessel which changing circumstances might render useless. And, before all, there was a strong expression of dislike to placing out of the immediate control of Parliament so large a sum for a considerable number of years. But the feeling, both of the House and of the nation, was quite decided that whatever was necessary for the security of the nation must be done without further delay, and the naval estimates were passed by a large majority. With respect to the army, the case was rather different; the Government still held to the view that the real defence of the empire was to be found in the fleet. The army estimates were therefore conceived in a narrower spirit. The explanations of Mr. Stanhope as to the sufficiency of the existing army for purposes of defence were regarded as satisfactory, and, though not without a certain amount of criticism, the estimates were allowed to pass.

Though England thus in some degree followed the example of continental nations, and had even in 1887 contracted ^{real} Policy of isolation. some form of understanding with Italy, the general and traditional policy of the Government was to stand aloof from European quarrels, with a reasonable certainty of finding allies should any grave difficulty occur. This policy of isolation appeared to the continental Powers mere selfishness. It produced a very general feeling of dislike to England, and threw upon the Foreign Office the delicate duty of maintaining friendly relations with countries mutually

hostile. Under these circumstances disputes, not in themselves of great importance, might easily have produced serious consequences if badly handled. And such disputes were plentiful, more especially with France. The continuation year by year of the occupation of Egypt, which had been originally entered upon with a solemn assertion that it was but a temporary measure, excited much jealousy and mistrust, and it was impossible for France to avoid feeling sore at the loss of an influence it had once so largely shared. That the occupation was practically necessary, and certainly highly advantageous to the people, failed to change the opinion of those who saw in it only covert aggression. Thus it was with France, eager to regain its old position in Europe and to break through the restraints which Bismarck's diplomacy had laid upon it, that the first serious difficulty arose.

There was a quarrel of very long standing connected with the Newfoundland fisheries. According to the English fisheries. contention, the question rested upon the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. By that treaty the rights of fishing upon the Newfoundland coast had been secured to the French, together with the right of drying fish upon the land, and of erecting for that purpose, and for that purpose only, stages and wooden huts. Permanent buildings and permanent occupation were distinctly forbidden. The matter had been mentioned in more than one subsequent treaty, and the portion of coast thrown open had been changed, but at no time did it appear that the original limitations had been withdrawn. The French however read into the treaties a meaning much more advantageous to themselves. They construed them as granting them the sovereignty of the coast over which their fishing rights extended. They had excluded British fishermen, had built permanent factories for the purpose of lobster-canning, had set at defiance the colonial authorities, and, according to the assertion of the Newfoundlanders, had rendered impossible all development over nearly half the island. The difficulty was aggravated by the very decided views of the colonial Government, and by its urgent appeals to the mother country to defend its rights. Great discontent was felt and shown at the slow and careful methods of the Foreign Office; and the *modus vivendi* by which, during the settlement of the question, the fishermen of the two nations were to enjoy joint rights, received anything but a favourable reception. It was even openly asserted that the arbitration suggested by the Home Government would not be accepted or its awards be obeyed. A deputation of the Newfoundland Ministry came over to England to urge the colonial cause. There was some talk

of separation, and an attempt to find in the American Republic the support refused by England. The quarrel became highly critical; a false step on the part of the naval officers of either nation might have brought on a serious quarrel and even war. The English Ministry, under these circumstances, made use of the imperial position of England in a manner which was certainly the very opposite of what is generally meant by "imperialism." They entirely overruled the colonial view, admitted most of the claims of France, and in 1891 brought in a Bill by which naval officers were authorised to secure even by force the carrying out of treaties. It was not however found necessary to press this Bill to a conclusion. The Government stated that an agreement had been arrived at, by which, after the second reading, time should be allowed for negotiation with the colonial Legislature, and the Bill be dropped if the *modus vivendi*, the arbitration award, and the maintenance of the existing treaties were accepted for three years, so as to give time for a final settlement to be reached. The Bill was not even read a second time; but the House declared its willingness to support the Government in carrying out the treaties and in going to arbitration.

But the greatest difficulties with which the Foreign Office had to contend were those arising from the almost sudden rise throughout Europe of a desire for colonising the African continent. Until 1876 the only European country exercising any considerable influence in Africa was England. The great discoveries on that continent had been made by Englishmen, in many places the British flag had been raised, British missionary enterprise had begun the work of civilisation and formed settlements far in the interior, and British influence was practically unquestioned. But it is difficult, perhaps impossible, for the Government to go much beyond the wishes of the nation at large. Long-sighted views of political or mercantile possibilities, unless shared by the people, are out of the reach of Government. The mercantile world was not at the time ready to take advantage of the opportunities made known by the reports of travellers. There seemed no particular reason why things should not continue in their present position. The openings thus neglected were utilised by other nations. A mania for colonial expansion, for the acquisition of extended territory, arose in all the great European countries. The English, suddenly awakened from their indifference, now threw themselves eagerly into the general scramble for the possession of the newly discovered country; and they at once found themselves face to face with Portugal, Germany, France, and Italy.

Now that the fit of apathy had passed away, and the complacent acquiescence in things as they were was rudely shocked, it must have been difficult for the Conservative leaders to keep aloof from the grasping temper of their followers. There are always men who consider the greatness of an empire to depend upon its size, who see in the acquisitions of their neighbours assaults upon themselves, and who are ready to raise the cry of injured national prestige at any concession or recognition of the rights of others. With such men

Lord Salisbury's attitude.

Lord Salisbury's policy was not in favour; the Press was full of their outeries. Lord Salisbury, though bitter in speech, was of a singularly peaceful disposition. Believing strongly in the right and duty of European nations to assist in the advance of civilisation, the somewhat questionable view that vast tracts of territory, if inhabited by men of a different colour, may be legitimately seized to allow of the expansion of the white races, was not repugnant to him. But he always, under all circumstances and in every continent, recognised the necessary give and take of that diplomacy which is the civilised substitute for war. No doubt he was fully conscious that, in times past, both he and his rivals in office had neglected opportunities of which the loss was now to be regretted. But he approached the present complications with an acknowledgment that other nations had fairly occupied the places which England had carelessly left vacant. He limited himself to securing what could be honestly spoken of as "British interests;" that is to say, such territories as were actually in some degree occupied by the British, or which appeared to be necessary for the expansion of such rudimentary settlements.

The difficulties with Portugal assumed the shape of a question as to the definition of the limits of ancient rights. The outburst of Portuguese energy in discovery and colonisation which marked the fifteenth century is a strange episode in history. A comparatively few years saw it fade away, and its results were left to be reaped by nations of a more persistent character. But what had been at that time effected in the southern part of Africa was now made the groundwork of astonishing pretensions. The whole breadth of the continent, from Mozambique and Lorenzo Marques on the east to St. Paul de Loando on the west, was claimed as belonging to Portugal by right of discovery. So vast a claim could not of course be admitted for a moment; facts too obviously contradicted it. There was no difficulty in showing that, whatever might have been done in the fifteenth century, the Portuguese had long since retired from the

Dispute with Portugal.

interior, where their very name was unknown; that the ruins which they claimed as evidence of early occupation were of very different origin; and that from dread of native hostility the Portuguese practically confined themselves to a few ill-kept and unhealthy settlements upon the coast. At these places, such trade as there was was in the hands of traders from British India; and such fictitious establishments as still existed a few miles up the Zambesi consisted at most of a powerless Portuguese official with perhaps a sergeant, to represent armed occupation. The expansion of Great Britain in Africa had assumed a form convenient no doubt at the time, as saving the Government from direct responsibility; but, as history seemed to prove, it was a form of questionable advantage in the long run. The greater part of the duties of government had been given into the hands of large chartered companies. Already there were two such companies attempting to develop the countries to the south of Lake Nyassa; and an important settlement of Scotch missionaries was spreading civilisation with marked success from their station at Blantyre in the highlands of the river Shiré, the chief northern tributary of the Zambesi. A third great company was coming into existence for the purpose of opening up the country immediately to the north of the Transvaal.

To have listened to Portugal would have been to check all these efforts. Lord Salisbury adopted a very firm attitude.

When the Portuguese sent expeditions to try to make good their claims and to form treaties with the native tribes, he despatched an ultimatum to the Court of Lisbon which in spite of angry demonstrations on the part of the populace could not be resisted. A line of demarcation was drawn, securing all that could reasonably be wished for, including the free navigation of the Zambesi and the Shiré, and practically pushing British influence as far as the south of Lake Tanganyika. The Treaty was laid before the House of Lords in June 1891. Lord Salisbury explained that the general principle consisted in the acknowledgment of treaty rights and of effective occupation, and that the result, on the whole, was a division which placed in our hands the territories suited for white occupation, leaving to Portugal those which could be developed only by the natives in accordance with Portuguese habits. There was not much difficulty in dealing with a Power so effete, or with claims so preposterous as those of Portugal; the case was different when the rival Power was Germany.

The dispute with Germany concerned territories which had been, and still were nominally, the possessions of the Sultan of Zanzibar. The desire for colonisation and for

Settlement
with Portugal,
June 1891.

Dispute with
Germany.

mercantile openings outside Europe had been strongly felt in Germany, and a society to foster colonisation had been formed which in 1884 sent out commissioners, Dr. Peters and Count Pfeil, to the east coast of Africa opposite Zanzibar. When these explorers returned in the following year, it appeared that with entire disregard of the authority of the Sultan they had contracted separate alliances with various native chiefs. For many years at Zanzibar the English Consul, Sir John Kirk, had been practically all powerful. Under him British influence had become supreme, and Zanzibar seemed to be rapidly developing into an orderly and well-governed State. The news that behind and even within the limits of the Sultan's dominions the Germans were establishing a new power, gave a considerable shock to English feelings. In March 1885 a charter had been granted to a German colonisation company, giving it an imperial protectorate over territories stretching from Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika. Prince Bismarck, bent upon realising his great schemes of military organisation, although he was not himself in favour of colonial expansion, could not afford to disregard the movement, and the eager colonial party had received his support. In the opinion of the more vehement partisans of British expansion, the Foreign Office had yielded unduly to German pressure. In 1886 a line of demarcation, running from the river Wanga, north of Zanzibar, including the mountainous district of Kilimanjaro, and terminating on the shores of Lake Victoria, was agreed upon to separate the rival "spheres of influence"; and at the same time the work of Sir John Kirk was entirely destroyed by the acknowledgment of a German protectorate over Zanzibar itself. The administration of the English "sphere of influence," which lay to the north of this line and included the newly discovered kingdom of Uganda, was, in accordance with late precedents, intrusted to an East African company, at the head of which was Sir William Mackinnon. The two companies thus placed in close juxtaposition differed widely in their methods of procedure with the natives; constant disputes arose between them, and the friction became very severe. Again, to the west of Lake Victoria, up to the confines of the Congo State, which had been established by the Belgian King at the instigation of Stanley the traveller, there was a large district not distinctly included either in the German or the English "sphere of influence." The aspirations of the British mercantile companies were high, and the idea had arisen of a continuous line of British trade settlements, or at least an extension of British influence from Cape Colony to Egypt. The great lakes afforded an almost continuous waterway, and the

possession of this trade road was regarded as of the first importance. The eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika and the territory between it and Lake Victoria were included in the German "sphere." Conduct not of the most scrupulous character had enabled Dr. Peters to form private treaties with chiefs in this neighbourhood and to the west of Lake Victoria. There seemed to be a risk not only of a formidable break in the great mercantile road, but of the lapping of German influence around and behind the Uganda kingdom.

Lord Salisbury was compelled to take the matter in hand. He treated it on his usual principles. He did not attempt to claim for England more than was due, considering the increase of the French power in Madagascar, the position of the Germans, and the labour and capital already spent in Africa. Under his management a Convention was arrived at in June 1890. The German Government was induced to disregard the private arrangements Dr. Peters had made with the natives, and to treat the whole matter as an international one. The surrender to Germany of the little island of Heligoland procured the restoration of the Protectorate of Zanzibar to England, and the encroaching temper of the Germans in Africa was set at rest by the demarcation of the limits of the rival spheres of influence in the disputed district. The line was drawn straight from a point on the west coast of Lake Victoria opposite to the termination of the old line from the coast to the lake until it reached the border of the Congo State. It was thought by many that this Convention favoured the Germans unduly. The uproar against it among the eager advocates of African expansion was violent. In their view the strict principle of "the hinterland" ought to have been applied; the German sphere should have been confined to the land immediately behind their coast-line, and the line dividing the English and German spheres of influence should have been drawn far to the south of the great lake. Stanley was indignant at "the pusillanimous surrender of forests and kingdoms." But, as Lord Salisbury said, "bargains must be regarded from the point of view of prudence as well as of boldness; and though we ruled the sea, and need fear no question of maritime rivalry, an entirely different set of considerations came into view when the question was one of taking possession of territories only accessible after three months' travel." When the treaty was completed, and it appeared that the right of continuing the trade road across the German territory had been secured, most reasonable men, and Stanley among them, were on the whole well satisfied.

Settlement
with Germany,
June 1890.

In this policy of prudent bargain and constant concession there was little of the temper of acquisitive imperialism. **Influence of European politics.** Nor did the unusual exertion of authority over a self-governing colony, in the case of Canada, and the shock given to its loyalty by the firm refusal of its claims, appear to be much in harmony with that more temperate form of imperialism which looks to closer union or even federation with the colonies. The justification for the unaggressive treatment of international and colonial questions may presumably be found in the general condition of European politics at the time. Direct alliances being out of the question, it became a necessity for English statesmanship to draw, as far as possible with an equal hand, support from either of the great continental groups. After all, the chief interest of England lay in Egypt. Promises forbade the assumption of a protectorate over that country, which forms the link not only with our Eastern empire, but with the largest and most important of our colonies. If England was ultimately to retire, time was wanted to complete the great work of re-establishment which had been taken in hand, and to confirm British influence. The only direct competitor for that influence was France. But the other great Powers did not regard the firm establishment of British supremacy with any favour; it wanted but little to induce Germany to throw its weight into the scale. Both France and Germany had therefore to be conciliated. The price paid was perhaps somewhat high; the acceptance of the French protectorate over Madagascar, and the support of French claims in Newfoundland, were matched by the great concessions to Germany in Africa, and the surrender of Heligoland.

The extension of British territory however still went on. For **Annexation of Burmah.** some years the relations between the Indian Government and Thebaw, King of Upper Burmah, had been severely strained. As early as 1879 our Resident had been withdrawn from the capital, and attempts to renew commercial treaties with the King had proved abortive. French agents had gained his ear. He had attempted to form European relations, and had contracted a Convention of some sort with France. The difficulty reached a climax when he was induced to confiscate the rights of the Burmah Trading Company in favour of French concessionaires. In the autumn of 1885 it was found necessary to address an ultimatum to him, demanding arbitration and the reception of a British Resident. He refused, and pretended that his arrangements with France, Italy, and Germany required that he should consult those countries. On this, General

Prendergast at once crossed the frontier, and after a short war occupied Mandalay, on November 28, 1885. The country thus conquered was in the following year annexed to the British empire. It was not without difficulty that the Government was established. A guerilla warfare was carried on by the inhabitants which lasted for several years. It was usual to speak of our enemies there as Dacoits, but there is no reason for thinking that they were other than patriotic people fighting for the independence of their country. The pacification of all the annexed districts was ultimately effected in 1889, and British Burmah administered like the rest of British India.

With the exception of the annexation of Upper Burmah, the history of India during Lord Salisbury's administration had been somewhat uneventful. The great ability of ^{Management of} ~~Indian affairs.~~ Lord Dufferin enabled him to pursue with success the policy begun by the delimitation of the boundaries of Afghanistan in 1884. The policy consisted in establishing an independent State between the Russian empire and the British dominions, and in preserving friendly relations with its ruler, so long as he was able to maintain himself on the throne, and to keep in order the wild tribes of which his kingdom chiefly consisted. Abdurahman proved to be a man of unusual vigour; and though now and then difficulties arose, they were overcome by the tact of the Viceroy and the wisdom of the Ameer in recognising in which direction his own interests lay. Within the frontier which had now been definitely adopted, great efforts were made to secure the defence of India. Various communications were opened, and a railway was constructed at considerable expense from the valley of the Indus to Quetta. In Baluchistan the influence of Sir Robert Sandeman secured the friendship of the chiefs. Each little war was made of use as an opportunity of surveying and mapping the difficult mountain barrier. Lord Dufferin also set on foot a system, which was completed by his successor, Lord Lansdowne, by which the irregular armies of the protected princes were reformed and reorganised. A feeling of loyalty to the British empire was so successfully encouraged that portions of these reorganised armies were regarded, and could indeed be used, as imperial troops. The presence of a considerable number of Indian princes at the Jubilee had given a signal proof of their acceptance of British rule.

But side by side with this apparent loyalty there had arisen a movement among the middle classes which threatened ^{Indian National} ~~Indian National~~ Congress. A so-called National Congress assembled at Calcutta in 1887, and continued to meet

yearly, the number of delegates rising from 350 at the first meeting to nearly 2000 in 1889. The language of the orators was not always decorous, and claims were put forward for the introduction of popular and parliamentary government in India, a demand which the state of the country, and the position of the English there, rendered it impossible to grant. Expressions of disapprobation from the Viceroy seem to have had a good effect upon the principal members of the Congress; the movement gradually declined, and it became little more than the mouthpiece of the class of educated Bengali Babus. But in estimating the position of the English in India, the opinion of that ever-increasing class, by whom the Press is largely worked, must always be taken into consideration.

One incident which, for awhile, attracted much attention in England was an outbreak in Manipur. In 1890 the Maharajah had been deposed by his brothers for incompetency. His successor had not proved satisfactory, and Mr. Quinton was sent, accompanied by some 500 troops, to set matters right. He summoned a Durbar, at which it was his intention to have arrested the Minister whose influence he believed to be the source of the misgovernment of the country. Warned in time, the Minister did not attend the Durbar. Some troops sent to apprehend him were fired upon, and the Residency was for many hours subjected to a sharp attack. In the evening Mr. Quinton and the other Englishmen were induced, on the pretext of a parley, to leave the Residency and visit the Palace. They were there assassinated (March 25, 1891). Armed intervention became necessary. With a small body of troops it was found possible to reassert British authority, and to place upon the throne a child, with the title of Rajah, under the care of a British officer. The wisdom of the attempt to change the Government, and the conduct of Mr. Quinton in planning the secret apprehension of the Minister, were severely criticised in England.

Outside the complications of the European system, and the quarrels indirectly connected with them, of which colonial expansion was the immediate cause, other questions of some importance, and not without a threatening aspect, arose between England and America. They were connected, as the French quarrel had been, with the rights of fishing, and affected both the eastern and western coasts of America. The first quarrel had reference to the eastern coast. The chief point at issue was the construction to be given to the long-established rule which granted territorial rights for a distance of three miles from the shore.

The rights of the American fishermen to ply their trade and to land in Canadian ports had been the cause of much dispute and of several treaties. The Americans had to all appearance gone beyond their treaty rights; and the Canadians, supported by the imperial Government, had seized and confiscated vessels fishing illegally. Very hot language had been used in America upon the subject, and threats had been uttered of such interruption of the intercourse between Canada and the States as would have caused a serious dislocation of trade. The American position was weak both legally and materially; the extant treaties were distinctly in favour of the Canadian contention; and the loss from interruption of intercourse would have pressed far more heavily upon the States than upon Canada. It was however thought desirable that the matter should be taken in hand by the British Government, and be treated as an international question. Accordingly, in 1887, Mr. Chamberlain crossed over to Canada; and there, in company with Sir Sackville West, the British Minister at Washington, and Sir Charles Tupper, the Canadian Minister in London, he met Mr. Bayard on the part of the United States, and concluded a treaty, signed on February 15, 1888. By this treaty the demands of the Americans were practically conceded. A clearer construction was given as to what constituted "territorial water." The large bays and gulfs exceeding three marine leagues in width were no longer to be regarded as inland seas, but were to be subject to the same rules as the open ocean; the restrictions laid by the fundamental Treaty of 1818 upon the resort of American fishermen to Canadian ports were to be removed, although except within definite limits the actual right of fishing near the shore was withheld. Even this restriction was to be removed if the United States would consent to renew the reciprocal commerce of fish and fish-oil duty free. It was only after much opposition that the Canadian Parliament could be brought to consent, for the sake of peace, to a treaty entirely disadvantageous to Canada. The Canadian concessions were however useless. A Presidential election was imminent. The feeling in America of opposition to any compromise with England was strong; and, with a view to securing votes, the Republican party refused to agree to ratify the treaty, favourable though it was to American interests. Still more surprising was it that Mr. Cleveland, the Democratic candidate, and himself the chief author of the treaty, apparently for the purpose of outbidding his Republican opponents immediately denounced it and declared the necessity of retaliatory measures against Canada. The step was not a successful one on his part;

General Harrison was elected President. Sir Julian Pauncefote took the place of Sir Sackville West, who, having unwisely mingled slightly in the political contest, had been obliged to withdraw. The treaty was abandoned, and the fishery question fell back into its old condition of uncertainty.

The second cause of friction with the United States was the long-standing dispute about the seal fishery in the Behrings Sea. Russia had claimed the sea within the Aleutian Islands as an inland sea. The claim was preposterous, and England and America alike had frequently protested against it. In 1866 Russia had sold Alaska, its property on the American continent, to the States. In spite of their former protest, the States at once assumed the Russian position, and confiscated some English ships that had taken seals in the open sea. Their object was twofold, the retention of a valuable monopoly to the exclusion of the inhabitants of Vancouver's Island or Canada, and the maintenance of the supply of seals, for it was chiefly females that were taken in the open sea. The ships which had been seized were condemned by the Local Court of Sitka in Alaska. The illegality of the verdict appeared so obvious that Lord Salisbury hoped to get it overruled by the Supreme Court. In this effort he failed, but he had at the same time taken the whole matter in hand, and had put it on a broader footing. He succeeded in bringing it to arbitration by a treaty signed in the early spring of 1892. After the lapse of a year the arbitrators made their report. It proved to be entirely in favour of the English contention as the law then stood; compensation for the shipmasters whose goods had been confiscated was thus secured. But for the future new regulations were made in accordance with the American view, not on legal grounds, but in order to secure the preservation of the seals, an object which both disputants really had at heart. No fishing was henceforth allowed within sixty miles of the Pribyloff Islands, the chief breeding-place of the seals; and a close time was fixed, during which all seal fishing was forbidden.

Every question as it arose had thus been handled with prudence and without bluster. To the majority even of the **Summary of foreign policy.** Opposition the conduct of foreign affairs had appeared judicious. Such objections as were made came chiefly from men of Radical tendencies. The exponent of these views was Sir Charles Dilke, a man who had given much thought to the foreign relations of the country. In a speech to his constituents, he declared that he wished to destroy the myth that Lord Salisbury's policy had won the approbation of the

Liberal party. He found much to blame in his policy of concession, and accused him of undue leaning to the Triple Alliance. The cession of Heligoland, which was a point of vast importance to Germany, and the whole arrangement of East Africa and Zanzibar were unnecessary concessions for which no adequate advantages had been obtained ; in Egypt alone had the right policy been pursued. This criticism is interesting, because one of the chief causes of mistrust felt in the incoming Ministry was the belief that Mr. Morley and others were eager to carry out the long-promised retirement from Egypt. It was a common idea that a determined foreign policy was the monopoly of the Conservatives. But the attitude assumed by a speaker so Radical in his policy as Sir Charles Dilke, and the well-known views of Lord Rosebery, seemed to promise that British claims would be upheld at least as firmly by the new Ministry as by their predecessors.

CHAPTER V.

MR. GLADSTONE'S MINISTRY, August 15, 1892, to March 3, 1894.

THE CABINET.

<i>First Lord of the Treasury and Privy Seal,</i>	Mr. Gladstone.
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer,</i>	Sir William Harcourt.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>	Lord Herschell.
<i>President of the Council,</i>	Earl of Kimberley.
<i>Secretary for India,</i>	
<i>Home Secretary,</i>	Mr. Asquith.
<i>Foreign Secretary,</i>	Lord Rosebery.
<i>Colonial Secretary,</i>	Marquis of Ripon.
<i>War Secretary,</i>	Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty,</i>	Earl Spencer.
<i>President of the Board of Trade,</i>	Mr. Mundella.
<i>Postmaster-General,</i>	Mr. Arnold Morley.
<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,</i>	Mr. Bryce.
<i>President of Local Government Board,</i>	Mr. H. H. Fowler.
<i>Vice-President of the Council of Education,</i>	Mr. Arthur Acland.
<i>First Commissioner of Works,</i>	Mr. G. Shaw-Lefevre.
<i>Chief Secretary for Scotland,</i>	Sir George Trevelyan.
<i>Chief Secretary for Ireland,</i>	Mr. John Morley.

IRELAND.

<i>Lord Lieutenant,</i>	Lord Houghton.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>	Mr. Samuel Walker.

THE general election, the vote of want of confidence, and the establishment in office of the new Government, was followed by an immediate prorogation. For five months the new Ministry was allowed to pursue its policy unquestioned, and to prepare for the coming struggle in January. The exact character of the expected Bill in favour of Home Rule was not disclosed. The speech-making fell chiefly to the Opposition. But the change of policy—conciliation as opposed to coercion—was at once visible. The general proclamation under the Crimes Act had already been withdrawn. There remained the special proclamation declaring the National League to be a dangerous association, and the two obnoxious clauses of the Crimes Act authorising the change of venue in trials and extended rights of search. These were all allowed to drop, and the Act became in Mr. Morley's hands entirely inoperative. Furthermore, the Irish Secretary did not shrink from moving in the difficult matter of restitution of evicted tenants. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into their claims, at the head of which was set

The new
Ministry
during the
recess.

an English judge, Mr. Justice Mathew. The constitution of the Commission and the opening speech of Mr. Justice Mathew excited extreme anger among the Unionists. Mr. Morley did not hide the fact that the members of the Commission were chiefly of Nationalist tendencies. Mathew's speech contained certainly a strong indictment of some of the Irish landlords. It was evident that an attempt was to be made to govern Ireland without exceptional laws, and to treat with much sympathy and indulgence the claims and conduct of the Irish people.

It was not in Ireland only that the respect for national wishes was shown. Mr. Gladstone had become so filled with ideas of nationality that to him the Welsh appeared scarcely less a separate nation than the Irish. In his speeches in Wales he implied in no doubtful manner that he would favourably consider the disestablishment of the Church in Wales as though it were a Welsh Church, and would throw no obstacle in the way of changes in the Welsh Land Law analogous to those he had carried out in Ireland.

In England the questions which required immediate handling were the distress among the large class of unemployed and the clamorously demanded right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square. Both Mr. Mundella, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. Asquith, the Home Secretary, showed skill and firmness in meeting the difficulties which arose. While listening with much sympathy to the case of the unemployed, Mr. Mundella made it plain that legislation in their favour was impossible; but at the same time he organised in his office a Labour Department, from which he hoped they would derive much benefit. Mr. Asquith, adhering to the view that the use of Trafalgar Square was a privilege and not a right, consented to allow meetings to be held there under certain limitations and conditions to be arranged with the police. The measure proved successful. A full meeting or two were held, and then, opposition having disappeared, they gradually dwindled to nothing.

Abroad there was no dislocation of policy. Nowhere was the expected weakness of the Government visible. As to Uganda, where the East African Company had proved unable to maintain its position, the Foreign Office desired further information, but showed no signs of being willing recklessly to withdraw; a special commissioner, with very large powers, was appointed to examine the position in all its aspects. In Egypt, though Mr. Scott Moncrief and Sir Alfred Milner were recalled, it was only

Trafalgar
Square
meetings.

Foreign
affairs.

because they were wanted at home. Their places were satisfactorily filled. Colonel Kitchener was put at the head of the Egyptian Army as Sirdar, and Sir Evelyn Baring (now become Lord Cromer) continued to exercise his great beneficial influence over the Khedival Government. Various difficulties however seemed to be threatening. Abbas, the young Khedive, who had succeeded his father in the beginning of 1892, began to show signs of restlessness. Not unnaturally, there was always a party in Egypt which, either from a real nationalist feeling or won over by the intrigues of France, was strongly opposed to the British supremacy. This party hailed the efforts of Abbas to assume a more independent position and to assert his right of nominating his own Ministers by the removal of Mustapha Fehmi, and the appointment of Fakri, a member of the Nationalist party, as chief Minister. The firm attitude assumed by Lord Cromer overawed the Khedive, and a compromise was effected by which Riaz Pasha was placed at the head of the Government (January 1893). The support given to Lord Cromer by the English Government, made evident to the Egyptians by an increase of the army of occupation, enabled him to encounter successfully for the time the rising feeling of the Nationalists. But the year did not pass without further indications of dissatisfaction, which required to be met by great tact and self-restraint. Fortunately the required skill was not found wanting, and the general course of improvement both in financial and in public works continued unchecked.

The Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament (January 1893) made clear to the public what had already been fore-shadowed in Ministerial utterances, that, while the first place in the Liberal programme was to be occupied by Home Rule, many other items of what was known as the Newcastle programme were to find a place in it. Bills were promised for improved registration, and for the establishment of equality of franchise by the limitation of each elector to a single vote; for defining employers' liability; for the limitation in certain cases of the hours of labour; for the creation of parish councils; for securing local option; and for "preventing the growth of new vested interests in ecclesiastical establishments in Scotland and Wales," a preliminary step towards dis-establishment. As was foreseen at the time, as the Ministers themselves must indeed have foreseen, but few of these measures were carried through. The way was still stopped by the Home Rule question.

The "Government of Ireland" Bill, produced as soon as the Address was passed, differed considerably from that of 1886. The Irish Legislature was to consist, as in England,

**Opening of
Parliament.**

**Home Rule
Bill, 1893.**

of two bodies regarded as representing an upper and a lower House, a legislative council and a legislative assembly. The Council and the Assembly were to be elected by different constituencies, the first by those rated at £20, the second, 103 in number, by the existing constituencies. The legislature was to busy itself exclusively with Irish affairs. Questions of peace and war, of treason, of the law of aliens, and of external trade were withdrawn from its purview. Religious freedom was to be secured. The Viceroy was to be appointed for six years, irrespective of religion or party. An executive committee of the Irish Privy Council was to act as his Cabinet. Subject to the sanction of the Sovereign and the advice of his Cabinet, he had the power of veto on Irish Bills. If the two Houses disagreed, they were to be called to meet in common, and the question was to be left in the hands of this joint meeting. An appeal lay to the Privy Council, if the Irish Parliament should overstep its constitutional rights. As a precaution, in order to secure the purity of the Bench, the judges were to be irremovable; two of them were to be specially appointed to consider financial questions. The Irish constabulary, left during the period of transition under the authority of the English administration, was to be gradually absorbed into a local police. The financial arrangements might be reconsidered after fifteen years. Thus far the Irish constitution only was considered. The more difficult questions connected with its relation to England remained. One of the chief objections to the former Bill had been the exclusion of Irish members from the central Parliament, which was regarded as incompatible with its imperial character. The counter arguments alleged had rested on the impropriety of allowing the Irish, over whose affairs Great Britain had no longer any control, to exercise what might at times prove a paramount influence over English affairs. In the new Bill Mr. Gladstone attempted to avoid the dilemma. Reduced in number to 80, the Irish members were to enjoy a limited right of voting in the imperial Parliament. A line was drawn between what was exclusively English and what was imperial. Questions expressly confined to Great Britain, taxes not levied in Ireland, and appropriation of money for anything except imperial services, were withdrawn from their cognizance. The financial arrangements had been also modified, and the payment of a lump sum by Ireland (which had been stigmatised as tribute) disappeared from the Bill. The Irish Budget, as explained by Mr. Gladstone, could be so arranged as to place in the hands of the Irish Legislature a surplus of £500,000. Certain changes took place subsequently in these arrangements; and finally the payment from Ireland was

calculated upon its actual contribution at the time to the imperial revenue. It appeared that after the expenditure of the Irish revenue upon Irish objects, the amount payable to the imperial exchequer would amount to about £2,300,000. From this had to be deducted for the present the £500,000 a year which England undertook to pay for the maintenance of the constabulary.

No sooner was this Bill introduced than the Government hurried to fulfil the wishes of the English reformers. In rapid succession the Bills promised in the Queen's Speech were introduced, though the tactics of the Opposition prevented any of them from advancing far beyond the first stages.

The already well-known determination of the House of Lords to throw out the Home Rule Bill prevented it from arousing outside the House the enthusiasm which had accompanied the earlier Bill. But within the House it afforded opportunity for a somewhat reckless exhibition of the powers of the Opposition. It is instructive to the student of party politics to observe that, while the Bill of 1886 had been chiefly condemned on the ground that the exclusion from Westminster of the Irish members derogated from the dignity of the imperial Parliament, the present Bill was chiefly assaulted on the ground that the presence of the Irish members even though limited in numbers and with a restricted right of voting was disastrous to the real interests of imperial legislation. In fact, the struggle in the House was a mere faction fight. As usual it was in the Committee stage that the warfare was carried on with most determination. Every point was subjected to the most captious criticism, and the spirit of party ran so high that all the decencies of Parliamentary usage were forgotten. While members of the majority were not ashamed to stigmatise Mr. Chamberlain as "Judas," an audible whisper of "murderer" was thought a fitting accompaniment to the mention of Mr. Davitt's name. The Committee indeed did not close without an indecent exhibition of personal violence. No doubt such utterances came chiefly from the rank and file, but outside the House the leaders did not lag much behind their followers. "The Government," said Mr. Chamberlain, "are using their opportunity to betray the interests of the country, sacrificing them to men who have been the bane of their own country, but who shall not be the ruin of ours." "An intolerable, an imbecile, an accursed Bill," was what Lord Salisbury called it; while Lord Randolph Churchill declared that the Irish leaders were "political brigands and nihilists," and that the Government had been

English Bills.

Bitter opposition to Home Rule.

"as capricious as a woman, and as impulsive and passionate as a horde of barbarians."

Beyond the introduction and explanation of the numerous promised measures, the Government had been unable to advance before Easter in face of the eager opposition which they encountered, and which culminated in the introduction of a vote of censure on the 27th of March. So persistent were the opponents of the Bill, so nearly allied to obstruction were their methods, that Mr. Gladstone, with the acquiescence of all sections of the majority, declared his intention of taking all the time of the House for Government business, and his determination after the briefest of vacations to introduce the second reading of the Home Rule Bill on the 6th of April. On that day the great struggle began. Seldom has the House of Commons more thoroughly earned its title to be considered a Parliament. If talking was desirable, there was undoubtedly enough of it. For twelve nights a continual flow of words, sometimes eloquent, sometimes reasonable, but seldom adducing any new arguments, filled the House. There were of course in a measure of such importance abundant points on which opinions might vary. Most of these received attention from the Opposition. But the main objections were still the same as of old, the desertion of the loyal minority, the inefficiency of any guarantee of imperial supremacy, the danger of intrusting government to men so reckless as to have conceived "the plan of campaign," and now the added argument that the limitation of the voting power in the imperial Parliament, and the restrictions laid on the subjects within the cognizance of the proposed local Parliament, were derogatory to the Irish and inconsistent even with the avowed object of the Bill. This seemed indeed to be chiefly a matter for the Irish themselves, and although Mr. Redmond and his followers refused to accept the Bill as final, the Irish party as a whole welcomed it with some enthusiasm. The arguments in favour of the Bill showed no greater novelty. Mr. Gladstone, in closing the debate, still put prominently forward his trust in the Irish people, the failure for the last six years of that steady coercion, or, as they called it, "firm government," which the Unionists had claimed as the panacea for Irish ills, and the great moral duty which lay upon England to rectify the misgovernment of six hundred years. A majority of 42, the full majority which the Ministry could claim, including the Irish, supported the second reading (April 21).

But, long though its passage had been, the Bill was far from having

Home Rule
debates.

reached smooth water. The Committee stage lay before it, and the tactics of the Opposition were avowedly to destroy it if they could not stop it. It was plain that every point would be fought at exorbitant length; it took five days to carry the first clause, which was concerned with the supremacy of the imperial executive.

Mr. Gladstone at first showed himself somewhat conciliatory, and accepted amendments from the opposition so freely as to excite the anger of the Irish and even to threaten a dissolution of the party. He found himself almost compelled to take up a stiffer attitude. The struggle thus became still more embittered, and the Committee, which began its sittings on the 8th of May, had by the 28th of June got no further than the fourth clause. It became absolutely necessary that some measure should be taken to vindicate the authority of the majority. On the following day Mr. Gladstone introduced a resolution of which he had given previous notice. The clauses of the Bill were divided into sections, and a time limit was fixed, within which all the clauses in each section were to be put to the vote, whether they had been debated or not. The opposition to such a resolution was of course vehement. Mr. Balfour stigmatised it as an attempt to silence the voice of Great Britain. The Government and their supporters refused to join in the debate, in spite of the taunts of their adversaries. Mr. Chamberlain declared that they were "the slaves of the Irish party." "There sit the men," said he, pointing to the Irish members, "who pull the strings of the Prime Minister of England. The British empire is being sold by private treaty." The resolution was, however, carried by a majority of 32. There thus arose a second precedent for what has been since known as the guillotine. Once before, in 1887, a similar resolution had been found necessary in order to force the Crimes Bill through committee. But Mr. Gladstone had evidently shrunk from using the precedent, and had only introduced his resolution with extreme regret and under a feeling of its absolute necessity. He pointed out that the real question was whether the majority should or should not prevail, "If the will of the majority was not allowed to prevail, Parliamentary institutions would be a mockery and an imposture." That, in spite of their violent outcries against this method of procedure, the Conservatives should have subsequently adopted it, seems to show that in face of an energetic and factious minority some such method is a matter of necessity.

**Home Rule
Bill in Com-
mittee.**

**The "Guillo-
tine," June 29,
1893.**

As a matter of course, it now became the business of the Opposition to bring discredit on the Bill by preventing the discussion of many of its clauses. It thus resulted that not more than ten of the original forty clauses were discussed at all. One alone, clause 9, of the third section occupied the whole week allowed for that section. It must be confessed however that it concerned the most important and difficult subject of the Bill, the retention of the Irish members in the imperial Parliament. On this point, Mr. Gladstone found it necessary entirely to change the original provisions of the Bill. Explaining that there were three possible means of solution—the absence of the Irish members, their complete presence, or their occasional presence with limited powers of voting—he stated that the Government were willing to be led by the wishes of the House. He himself had preferred and had suggested in his Bill of 1886 the entire removal of the Irish members from the House, and it had been the chief cause of the failure of that Bill. He would willingly have withdrawn from that position and have admitted them freely, but as there were frequent expressions of a strong feeling against this step, he and his colleagues did not think it right to urge the representatives of Great Britain “to accept a system under which members coming from Ireland were at the same time to have a complete command over their own domestic affairs, and to possess a power of controlling the domestic affairs of Great Britain equal to that possessed by those who represented Great Britain.” The Government, he said, had therefore adopted the system of limited voting, but were willing to accept any change in this respect which the House preferred. The majority appeared to favour the unconditional admission of the Irish members to the Parliament at Westminster, and it was in this form that clause 9 was passed. When the fatal day arrived on which the knife of the guillotine was to fall on all the remaining clauses, a scene of violence probably unprecedented in Parliament was presented. Mr. Chamberlain had used the words with regard to the regularity with which his party followed Mr. Gladstone, “The Prime Minister calls ‘black,’ and they say ‘it is good;’ he calls ‘white,’ and they say ‘it is better.’ It is always the voice of a god; never since the time of Herod has there been such slavish adulation.” At the name of “Herod” a furious storm arose, amidst which were heard cries of “Judas.” It was in vain that the Chairman tried to enforce the closure. Some how or other, in the midst of the uproar, blows were given, and indescribable disorder for some minutes raged. It was

Debate on
retention of
Irish members.

Riotous scenes
in the House,
August 1893.

hushed however by the return of the Speaker, and the forty-seventh and last sitting of the Committee was at length brought to an end. A few days afterwards (August 30) the third reading was taken. Again exceptions were raised to the principles of the Bill, but at last, on the 1st of September, it was carried by a majority of 34 in a House of 568. An examination of the minority showed that without the Irish members the Government would have failed to carry the Bill by 23 votes.

There was no doubt as to the reception of the Bill when it was brought before the House of Lords. A House of hereditary legislators is almost of necessity conservative; a House which represents property, and little else, can scarcely fail to object to any change which threatens the form of society on which its position depends. It was to a very willing audience that Lord Salisbury had propounded his plausible theory that, although it might be unwise, even perhaps impossible, for the House of Lords to withstand the firmly expressed wishes of the nation, it had the power, and indeed the duty, of insisting upon the clear expression of the national opinion, and of forcing a dissolution if it believed that the House of Commons did not truly represent the feeling of the people. This was the line of argument pursued by the Duke of Devonshire, to whom, as leader of the Liberal Unionists, was given the task of replying to Lord Spencer's introduction of the second reading of the Bill. To that argument no doubt what had taken place in the Lower House gave additional weight. The small majority, the sudden change of opinion in Committee as to the retention of Irish members, the paucity of amendments moved from the Ministerial side, and the wholesale application of the closure, almost unprecedented and bearing the appearance of a violent restriction of the right of free debate, certainly gave colour to the assertion that the Bill was little more than the expression of the views of one man, by whose imperious will it had been forced through the House. The debate lasted four days. It was remarkable for a virulent and able attack upon Mr. Gladstone by the Duke of Argyll, for a very temperate and sympathetic speech from Lord Spencer, and for a playful argument from Lord Rosebery, who concealed his real earnestness under a tone of easy banter, but whose arguments disclosed that opportunist temper which has constantly marked his career. "Home Rule was not to him a fanaticism nor a question of sentiment, scarcely even a question of history, nor a council of perfection, but merely the best thing which could be done under the circumstances." But from whichever side

**Home Rule
rejected in the
Upper House.**

the speaking came, it was well understood that it could have no effect; the conclusion was foregone. In an unusually crowded House there were but 41 votes in favour of the Bill, while 419 joined in rejecting it.

Time had undoubtedly favoured the Unionist cause. The extraordinary powers of delay which are inherent in the constitution, and the conservative temper which, in spite of the general energy and progressive force of the people, is the marked characteristic of the English race, had had an opportunity of asserting themselves. While the relief which the Irish had been taught to expect was kept in abeyance, strong in their hope for the future they had for awhile laid aside those extreme measures of discontent which had compelled England to take notice of them. The tension was relaxed, and the Irish question, grave though it was, no longer held its place as the one great necessary question to be solved. Those men who felt deeply the necessity of changes in England itself were no longer content to postpone the realisation of the reforms they had at heart. If the great composite Liberal party was to be kept together, it was necessary that some attempt should be made to satisfy its most eager supporters. From a mere party point of view, whether for the general Liberal interest or to secure the passage of the Home Rule Bill, a consolidation of interests was a necessary preliminary to a new general election. The claim of the House of Lords to force a dissolution was therefore entirely disregarded, and the Government proceeded to carry forward some of the items of that over-extensive programme with which they had ushered in the session.

A measure had already been introduced for the improvement of Parliamentary registration. It was admitted that many of the anomalies of the existing system were cured by it; Registration
Bill.

but some of the younger Conservatives, seeing in it, as they said, rather a small Reform Bill than a Registration Bill, succeeded in stopping its course and referring it to a Select Committee, and it was no further heard of. A similar disaster befell all attempts at temperance legislation. A Local Option Bill had been introduced, by which a certain number of electors might claim a Temperance
Bills. poll, and, if a two-thirds majority was there obtained, the issue of new licences and the renewal of the old licences were to be alike stopped for three years. The Bill refused to recognise any right of compensation to the existing licence holders, but allowed them three years' grace. The Bishop of Chester, in the Upper House, treated of

the same subject from a different point of view, and introduced a plan for the adoption of what is known as the Gothenburg system. A company was to be formed in any area which expressed a desire for it, and was to have entire command of the public-houses, which it was to be allowed to purchase at a price fixed by arbitration. Beyond a dividend of 5 per cent., all profits of the trade were to be devoted to public improvements in the area; the number of public-houses was fixed at one to every thousand inhabitants in towns, one to every six hundred in the country. Neither the Government Bill nor the Bishop's Bill got as far as the second reading. But besides these abortive efforts, two Bills of prime importance, the Employers' Liability Bill and the Parish Councils Bill, had been introduced and fairly launched upon their career. The dilatory tactics of the Opposition made it impossible to do more than complete the necessary financial work before the close of the session, although Government took to itself the whole time of the House and kept it sitting till late in September.

An autumn session, to begin on the 2d of November, and to last, as **Autumn session, Nov. 2.** Mr. Gladstone prophesied, till Christmas, was a matter of necessity. The Government determined to press forward and to carry at least the two Bills which had already made some progress. They were to be regarded as "non-contentious"—that is though they had not passed the second reading, their principle was to be regarded as accepted, and their second reading to be at once taken. The epithet "non-contentious" proved strangely ill applied. The whole session was occupied in a long and detailed struggle over their clauses.

The Parish Councils Bill was undertaken as a completion and enlargement of the Local Government Act of 1888. **Parish Councils Bill.** It was to apply to the rural districts only. The numerous authorities—such as the Rural Sanitary Authorities, the Improvement Commissioners, the Local Boards, and the Highway Authorities—were to be reconstituted as District Councils. Below them in the hierarchy of authorities was to stand the Parish Council as the primary unit of local administration. In every parish there was to be constituted a parish meeting; and in villages of over 300 inhabitants, or in groups of smaller parishes, there was to be a Parish Council. To this Council was to be given the powers hitherto held by the Vestry, in all matters not directly affecting the Church. It was to appoint the overseers, to hold the parish property, the administration of the Allotment Act, and the charities with the exception of

those belonging to the Church. In order to carry out its duties, the Parish Council was to be armed with powers to hire and to purchase land compulsorily. It was also charged with the right of calling on the County Council to set the District Council in motion, if its duties as to sanitation or highways were neglected. All elections were to be carried on by ballot and on the "one man one vote" principle; this included the election of the Board of Guardians, from which all *ex-officio* members were henceforward to be excluded.

As in the case of the extension of the franchise to the labourer, and in the case of the establishment of local government, the opposition which the Bill encountered rested on the instinctive mistrust of the class below them felt by the wealthier classes. They could not bring themselves to believe that compulsory powers could be safely intrusted to the labourer, or that such an instrument would not be used as a weapon against themselves. The transference of the management of the charities seemed to open a door to unrestrained jobbery, and the removal of the existing trustees seemed an uncalled-for attack on the vested interests of their own class. It was with more reason that they dreaded the suggested changes in the administration of the Poor Law; it was not unreasonable to suppose that the judicious relief of poverty, at all times a matter of great difficulty, would in the hands of the members of a Parish Council degenerate before long into a system of indiscriminate outdoor relief involving an undue expenditure of public funds. It was upon these points that the discussion chiefly turned. An opportunity occurred which enabled the opponents of the Bill to justify their lengthened opposition to what was supposed to be a non-contentious measure. They were able to assert that with respect to the transference of the charities the principle of the Bill had been tampered with. Mr. Fowler, in introducing the Bill, had promised to deal liberally with the existing trustees; and this had been regarded as an essential part of the Bill. But the feeling of the Radical wing of the party in favour of putting the charities in the hands of the people themselves was so strong, that the Government thought it necessary to accept an amendment from their own side by which a majority, at all events, of the trustees should be elected by the Parish Council. Mr. Fowler's promise seemed thus to be entirely ignored. Nor did the Poor Law clauses escape without alteration. The Opposition urged that the whole question of Poor Law administration should be withdrawn from the Bill and treated as a separate matter. The Government declined to yield on this point, and successfully resisted

Second reading of Parish Councils Bill, Nov. 7.

went so far as to declare that its adoption would be fatal to the Bill ; and, in spite of the influence of Mr. Chamberlain, who stigmatised the action of the Government as a mere attempt to get up a cry against the House of Lords, the rejection of the amendment was carried (December 21) by the full majority of 62, and the Bill returned to the Upper House.

The two Bills were thus left incomplete when Parliament adjourned for Christmas, with the expectation of a still further prolongation of a session which was already of unprecedented length. As Mr. Gladstone, in spite of the many hard things which were said as to his arbitrary nature, was far too fully imbued with the old traditions of Parliament to look with favour upon the frequent employment of the closure, some other method had to be adopted to get the hotly contested Parish Councils Bill through the House of Commons. Means were found in a compromise, which was arranged between the leaders of the two parties, on the two great points at issue. In addition to the chairman or vice-chairman, Boards of Guardians were to be allowed to co-opt two other members ; and the definition of ecclesiastical charity was slightly altered. On the other side, the opposition to compulsory hiring of allotments was to be withdrawn if certain limits as to the character of the land hired were introduced, ostensibly for the protection of the tenant-farmer and landlord. It was thus found possible (on January 4) to get through all the remaining clauses of the Bill. Both Bills having now passed the Lower House, an adjournment was moved on the 12th of January in order to allow the House of Lords time to consider them. The Employers' Liability Bill had already been before the Upper House, and had been largely altered. It was now again sent back to the Lower House with the alterations confirmed. The reception of the Parish Councils Bill was not more conciliatory. All the chief provisions of the Bill were more or less altered. The population necessary to authorise a Parish Council was raised, the right of hiring land was placed under closer control, the franchise of voters at the parish meeting was limited, the financial clauses were altered, and the transference of the management of the charities from the old trustees to elective boards was disallowed. Thus far the Conservatives, with their allies the Liberal Unionists, in spite of grave warnings from the Government benches, had had it all their own way. There seemed however to be a line beyond which the conservative energy of the Liberal Unionists would not carry them. A motion of the Earl of

Compromise on
Parish
Councils Bill.

Parish Coun-
cils Bill in the
Lords.

Onslow demanding that no one should vote either at a meeting or a council who had not personally paid his rates, a motion which if carried would have entailed the wholesale disfranchisement of the labourer, at length roused the Duke of Devonshire to the declaration that he could not allow as practical or politic, considering the position of the two Houses, so wide a policy of disfranchisement. Lord Salisbury, although he continued to impress upon his hearers as a grave and fatal defect in the Bill, that it placed the power of expending the rates in the hands of those who did not personally pay rates, yielded to the pressure of his allies and recommended in face of the Duke of Devonshire's attitude the withdrawal of the motion. Enough had certainly been done to show the determination of the Lords to throw every obstacle in the way of the Liberal Government.

When the House of Commons reassembled (February 12), the two Bills were sent back to them for consideration entirely changed in their character by the action of the Upper House. Was the Government to allow itself to be thus overriden?

There was every indication of the approach of a severe constitutional struggle. Strengthened by the action of the Liberal Unionists in the House of Lords, the Government found it possible to reject most of the Lord's amendments with respect to the Parish Councils Bill. After a somewhat lengthened interchange of opinions and sending to and fro of the Bill, it was found possible to arrive at compromises fairly satisfactory to both parties, and the Bill was at length passed. The Parish Councils Bill passed.

The Employers' Liability Bill met a different fate. Although Lord Dudley's amendment was again rejected by a majority of 22, certain cross voting so reduced the majority that a sort of compromise setting a time limit to the operations of the Bill was carried against the Government by two votes. It was not to be expected that so feebly supported an opposition would produce much result or affect the vote of the House of Lords. The Bill was sent up (February 19) only to be again returned with the Commons' amendment disallowed. It had been Mr. Gladstone's intention firmly to withstand the action of the Peers. Their persistent opposition to the ministerial measures had driven him to regard the assertion of the supremacy of the Lower House as an object of the first importance. He had hoped to vindicate the power of the Commons by carrying the simple formula "that the Lords' amendments be set aside." The triumph which he had promised himself was denied him; it was discovered that this striking form could be used only when the privileges of the Commons were touched. The Employers' Liability Bill dropped.

expectation of the public had been raised to a high pitch, and it seemed a sorry conclusion when the Prime Minister was compelled to confine himself to a motion which led at once to the entire dropping of the Bill. The Lords had proved too strong for him. He had not indeed been forced to accept their amendments, but he had been obliged to allow their power of destruction. At length, on March 3, 1894, the session which had begun in January 1893 was brought to an end.

Disposed to peace in moderation as Mr. Gladstone was, and great as was his dislike to the acquisition of new imperial responsibilities, he found it at times impossible to withstand the pressure brought to bear upon him. What is sometimes spoken of as "the The Matabele War, 1893. natural expansion of the race," the offspring of the eager search for wealth disguised under that form of patriotism which sets before it as its object the extension of the empire, was too strong for him. Thus it happened in the case of the Matabele War in 1893. A body of adventurers had been enrolled as a Chartered Company under the influence of Mr. Cecil Rhodes in 1889, to hold and administer a territory in South Africa which by a liberal interpretation of agreements was held to have been conceded by Lobengula, Chief of the Matabele, the dominant tribe of intrusive Zulus. The territory in question lay north of the Transvaal and to the west of the Portuguese settlement on the coast, and was known as Mashonaland. A quarrel between the warlike Matabele and their former vassals the Mashonas produced a raid of so cruel and devastating a character that the European settlers were driven to resist it. As was inevitable in the general confusion, the Matabele were unable to draw a clear line between the territory of the Chartered Company and territory under British protection. The frontier of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was violated, and it became impossible for the imperial Government to stand aloof. The invasion of Lobengula's territory was authorised, and resulted, after some severe fighting, in the complete overthrow of the Matabele power. Bulawayo, Lobengula's chief town, was occupied, while he himself fled towards the north and died early in the following year. A vast addition was thus made to the country already administered by the Chartered Company. Under the name of Rhodesia it entered upon a rapid though not uninterrupted course of social and material progress.

Long though the session had been, its result was very scanty; very few of the great Government measures had been Close of Gladstone's career. brought to completion. But though a legislative

failure, it had been in many ways a personal triumph for the Minister. He had shown no signs of weakness in his management of his party. Though unable to satisfy his Radical followers, who, irritated by the lengthy struggle and extreme pertinacity of the Opposition, were threatening to force his hand, he still found himself at the head of a united party. He had upheld the dignity of the Ministry. He had refused to allow the Opposition to force upon him against his will a declaration of his plan for national defence. He had accepted the full responsibility for the Matabele War. He had defended with skill and temper the action of the Lord Chancellor, rudely assaulted by the Radicals for not immediately filling the Bench with Liberal Partisans. It was the last of his triumphs. The close of the session was something much more important than the cessation of a term of Parliamentary struggle. It was the close of the political life of one of the most remarkable statesmen ever produced by England. His impeachment of the House of Lords, during the discussion of the Lords' amendments to the Parish Councils Bill, was the last speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone in Parliament. A political life of more than sixty years, during much of which he had occupied a position of influence seldom equalled, was drawing to its natural conclusion; and though at eighty-four years of age he was still exhibiting a marvellous intellectual readiness, and a mastery of the details of party management which enabled him to hold the various sections of his followers together as no one else could have done, yet the infirmities of age were beginning to make themselves felt. Both ear and eye had lost something of their old acuteness, and the mind, whose versatility was still remarkable, was losing its sense of proportion, and was acquiring something of the old man's pertinacity in the pursuit of a single object. The speech which he delivered, and which many people at the time understood to be his last, was in no sense a farewell address, there were no personal allusions. Yet in its deeper meaning it marked a consciousness that the hour for retirement had struck. The great objects to which the last years of his life had been directed, the removal of the blot upon the empire caused by the persistent hostility of Ireland, and the establishment of a just and acceptable form of government there, had been ruined; the force on which he had relied to attain them, the force of the popular will of a well-ordered democracy, had been suddenly and completely checked. Wealth, property, aristocracy, typified in the House of Lords, and making full use of the constitutional powers of that House, had been strong enough to impose their will upon the nation, not on this question only, but on every other. In Mr. Gladstone's eyes the House

of Lords had become the great obstacle to every form of advance. It was not, as he explained, the little amendments which he was now accepting which were the real points at issue. "We are compelled to accompany that acceptance," he said, "with the sorrowful declaration that the differences, not of a casual or temporary nature merely, but differences of conviction, differences of prepossession, differences of mental habit, and differences of fundamental tendency, between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, appear to have reached a development in the present year such as to create a state of things of which we are compelled to say that in our judgment it cannot continue. The issue which is raised between a deliberative assembly elected by the votes of more than six million people, and a deliberative assembly occupied by many men of virtue, by many men of talent, of course with considerable diversities and varieties, is a controversy which when once raised must go forward to an issue. . . . My duty terminates by calling the attention of the House to the fact, which it is really impossible to set aside, that in considering these amendments, limited as their scope may seem to be, we are considering a part, an essential and inseparable part, of a question enormously large, a question which has become profoundly acute, which will demand a settlement, and must receive at an early date that settlement from the highest authority." Although this question, except for a brief space, has not assumed the exact shape which Mr. Gladstone foresaw, he was right in his prophecy. His departure from political life is coincident with a strong reaction towards the old conservative ideals. The claims of property and wealth have continually risen into prominence; and class distinctions, none the less real because tempered by a kindly and patronising interest in the well-being of the lower orders, have resumed much of their old strength.

Gladstone's
last speech.
March 1, 1894.

For four years longer Mr. Gladstone lived in retirement, vigorous and active-minded to the last. A painful illness, magnanimously borne, came to a close on May 19, 1898. The storms of party warfare which had beaten so wildly around him were for a moment hushed. The fervid admiration he had won, the political hatred he had excited, were merged in a touching unanimity of respectful regret and acknowledgment of his transcendent abilities, as the grave closed over the great statesman at his public funeral in Westminster Abbey.

Gladstone's
death.

CHAPTER VI.

LORD ROSEBERY'S MINISTRY (March 3, 1894, to June 24, 1895).

<i>First Lord of the Treasury,</i>	}						Lord Rosebery.
<i>President of the Council,</i>	}						
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer,</i>							Sir William Harcourt.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>							Lord Herschell.
<i>Secretary for India,</i>							Mr. H. H. Fowler.
<i>Home Secretary,</i>							Mr. Asquith.
<i>Foreign Secretary,</i>							Earl of Kimberley.
<i>Colonial Secretary,</i>							Marquis of Ripon.
<i>War Secretary,</i>							Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty,</i>							Earl Spencer.
<i>President of the Board of Trade,</i>							Mr. James Bryce.
<i>Postmaster-General,</i>							Mr. Arnold Morley.
<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,</i>	}						Lord Tweedmouth.
<i>Lord Privy Seal,</i>	}						
<i>President of Local Government Board,</i>							Mr. G. Shaw-Lefevre.
<i>Vice-President of the Council of Education,</i>							Mr. Arthur Acland.

IRELAND.

<i>Lord Lieutenant,</i>							Lord Houghton.*
<i>Chief Secretary,</i>							Mr. John Morley.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>							Mr. Samuel Walker.*

SCOTLAND.

<i>Chief Secretary,</i>							Sir George Trevelyan.
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* Not in the Cabinet.

ON the 3d of March the long-expected resignation of Mr. Gladstone took place, and Lord Rosebery was offered and accepted the position of Prime Minister. He undertook to carry on the Government on the same lines as his predecessor. The conduct of affairs had indeed led to a situation which somewhat suited Lord Rosebery's views. A Home Ruler and consistent supporter of Mr. Gladstone, he had none of the enthusiasm for Irish self-government which had induced Mr. Gladstone to make it almost the sole object of his political aspirations. He had no wish that it should, as it had hitherto done, entirely overshadow the many reforms required in other parts of the empire; he had no objection to allow the question to remain for the present in suspense. His view of Irish self-government was complicated with a large though scarcely formulated conception of a great federated empire. On the other hand, he earnestly desired the completion of

**Lord Rosebery
Prime Minister,
March 3,
1894.**

many of the objects at which the Liberal party aimed, and his practical character revolted at the condition of impotency to which Liberal legislation appeared to be reduced by the action of the House of Lords. He was ready therefore at once not only to take upon himself the duty of leading the Liberal advance along its old lines, but also to throw all his energies into that struggle with the Upper House which Mr. Gladstone had indicated as the necessary preliminary to any successful Liberal work.

If the restoration of old party lines was desirable, it was unfortunate that the maintenance of Home Rule as a very prominent item in the Liberal programme was a matter of necessity; party pledges and the distribution of parties in Parliament put an insurmountable obstacle in the way of dropping it. It may indeed be questioned whether the Unionists (who, but for Home Rule, might to all appearance have returned to the Liberal fold) had not already gone too far in their alliance with their Conservative friends to allow of their return. They had deeply modified the policy of the Conservative party. Mr. Chamberlain was already shaking off his earlier democratic impulses, and the line of cleavage was fast being drawn between radical and moderate Liberal, rather than between Liberal and Conservative. At all events, no sign of the reconstitution of a united Liberal party was seen. Even in the Ministerial majority a want of unanimity began to show itself, threatening further disruption. The Government were defeated on the Address by their own followers. An amendment moved by Mr. Labouchere to the effect that the House of Lords should be deprived of its power of veto was carried against the Government, which had to submit to the somewhat humiliating necessity of withdrawing the Address and substituting a new one. The incident was of course without result, but indicated the temper of the extreme Ministerialists sufficiently to explain the impossibility of any reunion of parties. The Ministerial majority in fact was too small for the purposes of a strong Government. Scarcely any of their measures could be brought to completion.

No possibility
of Liberal
reunion.

A Bill for the disestablishment of the Welsh Church was dropped after the first reading; a Registration Bill, directed to cure what was allowed to be a scandalous condition of things, and aimed chiefly against the abuse of plural voting, was stigmatised as a mere party measure in preparation for the coming election, and did not get beyond its second reading; the Evicted Tenants Bill, for the purpose of re-establishing in their farms in

Various Bills
introduced.

Ireland those who in the late land-war had been driven from them, was indeed carried in the Lower House by the use of the most stringent form of closure, but was at once rejected by the Lords (August 4, 1894).

It was only on financial questions that the Government was able to gain a distinct success. Sir W. Harcourt's Budget secured them this victory. The difficulties of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been increased by the large expenditure required for the navy. The sense of national insecurity, and the necessity for maintaining an irresistible naval force, which had given rise to the Naval Defence Act of March 1889, had not diminished. The stipulations of that Act had been carried out, and the Government had undertaken great and costly works in the improvement of harbours and in the establishment of naval barracks, and had begun building a large naval dock at Gibraltar. The programme laid down by the Defence Act had been completed. But foreign countries had meanwhile added to their navies; and, on the principle that the fleet of Great Britain should be a match for any two foreign fleets combined, Lord Spencer now thought it necessary to set on foot another great scheme of naval increase, to be completed as before in five years. The naval estimates, which had been prepared in February, showed an increase of £3,000,000 upon those of the year 1893-1894; and Mr. Gladstone just before his resignation had found himself unable to approve of a policy so wholly repugnant to the peaceful and economical traditions of his life. He would say, as we are told by Mr. Morley, "My name stands in Europe as a symbol of the policy of peace, moderation, and non-aggression. What would be said of my active participation in a policy that will be taken as plunging England into the whirlpool of militarism? For more than sixty-two years I have uniformly opposed militarism." Mr. Gladstone's retirement and the substitution of Lord Rosebery, whose views of imperial duty were somewhat different, allowed the production of the enlarged estimates. This great increase of expenditure, on the army and navy, on education, and on grants to assist local taxation, had raised the demands upon the revenue of the coming year to over £100,000,000. Sir William Harcourt estimated the deficit at four and a half millions. He did not propose to obtain this sum by borrowing, but by a rectification of what are known as the Death Duties. A duty was first to be laid upon the value of all property, whether real or personal, settled or unsettled, upon the fundamental principle that upon death the State should take a share of all money passing to a new owner. But

in the imposition of this tax the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the principle of graduation. The share to be claimed by the State was to vary from 1 per cent. upon estates of £500 to 8 per cent. upon estates of over £1,000,000. This general tax included and destroyed what had hitherto been known as the Probate and Account Duties. There remained a second tax hitherto known as the Legacy and Succession Duties. These were henceforward to fall equally upon real and personal property. In addition to the advantages likely to result from these great changes, he thought it necessary to add another penny to the income-tax for the coming year, and also a small additional duty upon spirits and upon beer. The Budget was very thoroughly discussed in Committee, and met with great opposition. But in spite of the pressure of his own party, Sir W. Harcourt declined to make use of the closure, and by patience and firmness succeeded in carrying his propositions almost unaltered. The change introduced was far-reaching, and its success as a financial measure has been since abundantly proved, although at the time it excited strong feelings of anger among the wealthier classes. They found a spokesman in the Duke of Devonshire, who, with a want of dignity unexpected from a statesman of so high a character, complained bitterly of the blow inflicted upon his class by the Bill. Henceforward it would be no longer possible, he urged, for men in his position to exhibit that easy liberality which was so advantageous to themselves and to the country.

*Alteration of
the Death
Duties.*

The rejection of the Evicted Tenants' Bill in the House of Lords was received by the nation with more equanimity than suited the views of a Government who were determined to rest their claim to popularity on their opposition to the Upper House. The autumn oratory, which had now become an habitual incident of party warfare, was chiefly directed to this question; and it was understood that, when Parliament reassembled, the great effort of the Government would be to secure the passage of a hostile resolution against the House of Lords. Some surprise was felt that there was no hint of any such intention in the Queen's Speech (February 5, 1895). Another Evicted Tenants' Bill, Welsh disestablishment, the popular control of the liquor traffic, the abolition of plural voting, and a measure for completing the system of county government in Scotland, all found a place; but of the House of Lords there was no mention. The Government were however right in this omission; the Crown could hardly recommend a resolution of one branch of the Legislature which injuriously affected the other. Tactically also, Lord Rosebery

*The Govern-
ment pro-
gramme.*

defended his action by explaining that a resolution carrying with it so great a constitutional change would of necessity produce an immediate dissolution; and for this he was not as yet prepared, until he had made some further use of his majority.

There was however quite sufficient ground in the Ministerial silence for a party attack; and an Opposition amendment intrusted to Mr. Chamberlain was moved to the Address, declaring that it was quite contrary to the public interest that the time of Parliament should be occupied in discussing measures which the Ministry was avowedly unable to pass, while a great constitutional question had been announced which required immediate settlement. The party situation was summed up in that amendment. The Opposition was desirous to secure a dissolution; the Ministerialists, at all events the tacticians among them, preferred to let the House of Lords still further discredit itself in the eyes of the electorate by refusing to pass Liberal measures, before calling on the country to decide upon the constitutional change which they had in view. The Ministerial majority, although small, was sufficient to enable them to pursue their own line. The measures promised in the Queen's Speech were accordingly introduced. Against an opposition falling just short of obstruction they were slowly pushed on. No Bill of importance however was destined to arrive at maturity. Although there were occasions, such as the second reading of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, on which the Ministers found themselves in possession of a fair majority, the numbers on which they could rely were so small that their tenure of power was constantly uncertain.

On the question of the election of a new Speaker, when a vote was taken on strict party lines, they secured the election of their candidate by no more than 11 votes. In April Mr. Peel was compelled by ill-health to resign the position he had long held with great dignity and success. All attempts at producing, as is usually thought desirable, a unanimous election to the vacant post proved in vain; and finally a vote was taken between Sir Matthew Ridley, nominated by the Opposition, and Mr. Gully, a comparatively unknown man, who was put forward by the Government. Time has amply vindicated the wisdom of the Government choice.

It was very generally believed, though no certainty in the matter "Filling the cup." could be arrived at, that the Government, in continuing to press forward their programme, and in avoiding a dissolution which seemed the natural method of strengthening

their position, were acting with the express object of passing measures in the Commons which the House of Lords would be certain to reject; or, in the cant language of the time, were attempting to "fill up the cup," in order that they might be able to appeal to the country with a still stronger cry against the obstruction of the Upper House. There is at least no doubt that the Prime Minister definitely put forward a reform in that House, and a change in its relation to the Lower House, as the first future object of the Liberal party. Party tactics of this sort are neither dignified nor safe. An accident may easily change a small majority into a minority; and so it now fell out. On the discussion of the expenses of the War Office, Mr. Brodrick moved a slight diminution, on the ground that the supply of cordite was insufficient. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman **Resignation of the Ministry.** replied that the experts whom he had consulted had expressed themselves satisfied. He unfortunately compromised his position by naming the exact amount in store. By so doing he rendered his appeal to expert authority nugatory; the House could now judge for itself, and, somewhat to the astonishment of both parties, the Government upon a division appeared in the minority, 125 against 132. The House at once adjourned, and on the following day, the 22d of June, it was known that the Government had resigned, and that Lord Salisbury had been called upon to form a Ministry. Thus upon a small side issue the Conservative Government were returned to power; and during the remainder of the reign were able to continue in office, supported in part by the natural reaction which followed the long course of Liberal advance, in part by the political blindness which invariably attends a state of war.

The Parliament was dissolved on the 8th of July. The general election which ensued consummated the rout of the **General election.** Liberal party. It was in vain that Lord Rosebery, following in the lines of Mr. Gladstone's last speech, attempted to rally his followers to a great attack upon the House of Lords. The party was out of hand; its vast and diffuse programme militated against concentrated effort; no enthusiasm was evoked by the attitude of the leader; the dominating personality of Mr. Gladstone was no longer there to unite jarring opinions. The result was a crushing defeat. The Unionist Ministry could command a majority of 152 in the new Parliament. In no Parliament since that which immediately followed the great Reform Bill had either party been in a position of such complete predominance.

CHAPTER VII.

LORD SALISBURY'S MINISTRY, June 24, 1895.

<i>Premier,</i>	Lord Salisbury.
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer,</i>	Sir M. Hicks-Beach.
<i>Lord Chancellor,</i>	Lord Halsbury.
<i>First Lord of the Treasury,</i>	Mr. A. Balfour.
<i>President of the Council,</i>	Duke of Devonshire.
<i>Lord Privy Seal,</i>	Lord Cross.
<i>" " " "</i>	Lord Salisbury (Nov. 1900).
<i>Secretary for India,</i>	Lord George Hamilton.
<i>Home Secretary,</i>	Sir Matthew Ridley.
<i>" " " "</i>	Mr. Ritchie (Nov. 1900).
<i>Colonial Secretary,</i>	Mr. Chamberlain.
<i>War Secretary,</i>	Lord Lansdowne.
<i>" " " "</i>	Mr. Brodrick (Nov. 1900).
<i>Foreign Secretary,</i>	Lord Salisbury.
<i>" " " "</i>	Lord Lansdowne (Nov. 1900).
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty,</i>	Mr. Goschen.
<i>" " " "</i>	Lord Selborne (Nov. 1900).
<i>President of the Board of Trade,</i>	Mr. Ritchie.
<i>" " " "</i>	Mr. G. Balfour (Nov. 1900).
<i>Postmaster-General,</i>	Duke of Norfolk.*
<i>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,</i>	Lord James.
<i>President of Local Government Board,</i>	Mr. Chaplin.
<i>" " " "</i>	Mr. Long (Nov. 1900).
<i>President of Board of Agriculture,</i>	Mr. Long.
<i>" " " "</i>	Mr. Hanbury (Nov. 1900).
<i>First Commissioner of Works,</i>	Mr. Akers Douglas.
<i>President of Educational Council,</i>	Sir John Gorst.*
<i>Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,</i>	Earl of Cadogan.
<i>Chief Secretary for Ireland,</i>	Mr. Gerald Balfour.*
<i>" " " "</i>	Mr. Wyndham (Nov. 1900).*
<i>Lord Chancellor for Ireland,</i>	Lord Ashbourne.
<i>Secretary for Scotland,</i>	Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

* Not in the Cabinet.

THE withdrawal of Mr. Gladstone from the political arena, and the rapid disappearance of the Liberal Ministry of which he had been the head, produced a complete change in the centre of political interest. It was no longer the Irish question on which party warfare hinged. Though it no doubt continued to occupy a place of great prominence, serving as a permanent obstacle to any reunion of the Liberal party, yet, as far as the nation was concerned, it now gave place to questions of more domestic interest, and before all to the question of imperial unity.

The new
Ministry.

The imperial idea was the monopoly of neither party. The late Prime Minister had long preached it, though it had appeared to him scarcely within the realm of practical politics. Among the Conservatives into whose hands the Government had now so triumphantly passed, it found an eager supporter in Mr. Chamberlain, a man in intellectual power perhaps not superior to Lord Rosebery, but of a more practical and self-confident disposition, and of unrivalled tenacity in pursuing to success whatever objects he set before him. Few men have excited more political animosity. His bitter speech, his apparent tergiversations, the outspoken character of his utterances, and the little respect which he showed for the ordinary conventions of political life, afforded constant openings for attack. But an unbiassed consideration of his whole chequered career leads to the conclusion that there was a certain breadth of view, an aim wider and higher than the detail he was for the moment handling, always present with him at every stage of his life. Whether engaged in municipal work at Birmingham, or supporting the views of the Democratic Radical, or turning upon his old friends and withstanding with all his might what he regarded as a step towards the dissolution of the empire, it was always the great idea of well-governed yet self-governed units within an unbroken and powerful unity which filled his mind. To all appearance a practical, sharp, even over sharp, man of business, he was at heart an idealist. His position as Colonial Secretary gave him opportunities he was not slow to embrace. The establishment of the Australian Commonwealth, and the South African War, with its attendant incidents, afford striking instances of the successful realisation of his idea. As Colonial Minister, he shared with Lord Salisbury (who retained the Foreign Office in his hands) the direction of the external policy of England, which, from the first moment of the accession to office of the new Ministry, began to absorb the public attention.

Mr. Chamberlain Colonial Secretary.

In fact, Mr. Chamberlain had hardly taken possession of his office before his treatment of a difficulty which arose in West Africa gave proof of the masterful temper in which he was likely to carry out his duties. Prempey, King of Ashanti, had fallen out with the British authorities on the Gold Coast Settlement. His slave trading, his human sacrifices, his refusal to complete the payment of the indemnity required after the expedition of 1874, and his vexatious interferences with trade, had called for remonstrance, and the remonstrance had been disregarded and defied. Without hesitation Mr. Chamberlain sent a peremptory ultimatum demanding the

Ashanti War, 1896.

establishment of a British protectorate. When the time given for reply elapsed and no answer had been received, he at once ordered troops into the country. On January 17, 1896, Kumasi, Prempey's capital, was occupied without resistance. There was no longer any talk of a Protectorate; the annexation of Ashanti was at once declared. A garrison was left, and the expedition returned triumphantly to the coast. The little war was not without valuable results. In the subsequent disputes, turning as they did upon questions connected with the "hinterland" of this part of Africa, the occupation of Kumasi was of considerable value.

The contrast between the methods of the Colonial Minister and those of Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office was accentuated by the settlement of a difficulty which had arisen with France in Siam. The attempt to form a "buffer State," as it was called, between the possessions of France and England in the Siam peninsula had produced constant friction. With his usual clear perception of the real bearings of the question, Lord Salisbury risked the imputation of neglecting British interests, and made considerable concessions of territory to France, receiving in exchange only a definite frontier and a joint undertaking to respect and uphold so much of Siam as was still left to the King (January 5, 1896). The compensation did not at first sight appear sufficient, and Lord Salisbury's policy met with a good deal of blame. But the definition of the frontier, and the security of Siam from disturbance by further encroachments, were probably well worth the price paid.

The Ministry made its first Parliamentary appearance in the session of 1896. With a few internal changes, and interrupted only by a general election in 1900, it lasted to the end of the reign. It is almost too soon to tell its history. The difficulties already indicated press more and more heavily on the historian. The relative importance of facts and the certainty of conclusions become constantly more questionable. Thus it is impossible to say with any certainty whether or not the Cabinet was guided by any distinct rule of policy in handling what may be spoken of as its administrative legislation. It would however appear that either by stress of circumstances or by the influence direct or indirect of certain strong members of the Cabinet, a striking similarity is to be found in every instance of such legislation. There is always the same anxiety to preserve the appearance of unity, but to admit within the limits of that unity the largest possible amount of decentralisation and local liberty. The same principle is found underlying the general treatment

of the imperial question, and the relations of the colonies to the mother country; and scarcely less obviously in the policy pursued by the Government with respect to Ireland, London, and the reorganisation of the national education.

On confronting Parliament, the Ministers found themselves occupying a more difficult position than they had anticipated. **Ministerial promises.** They had spread their nets widely at the general election, and had not been sparing in promises to secure success. To more classes than one hopes had been held out. To the Church it had been suggested that assistance was procurable for the denominational schools. The agriculturalist might look for something to help him over the general depression of his business. The workman was to receive compensation for injuries. The Land Law of Ireland was to be improved. Still more attractive was the optimistic opinion with regard to foreign affairs, of which Mr. Curzon had made himself the mouthpiece. The advent of the Conservative Ministry was to change foreign hostility into friendship; and international quarrels, the offspring of the deep-seated distrust felt by foreign Governments in the Liberal party, were to disappear before the confidence which would be inspired by the wisdom and skill of the new Ministry. The many promises had somehow or other, either wholly or in part, to be fulfilled if the Conservative majority was to be maintained. But the absolute and almost laughable contradiction of Mr. Curzon's prophecies by the actual facts seemed to leave but little opening for successful domestic legislation. The list of thorny international questions, which took up the larger part of the Queen's Speech, seemed enough of itself to occupy the whole attention of any Ministry. There were difficulties with France and Siam, Russia and Afghanistan, the United States and Venezuela, Turkey and the Armenians, disturbances in Chitral, the Ashanti War, and the Jameson Raid, with the accompanying complication caused by the sympathetic telegram sent to Mr. Kruger by the impulsive German Emperor. Yet before the Parliament came to an end in 1900 the Ministry had in some degree fulfilled most of their promises. It was however a work of time, and was only rendered possible by the lengthened existence which good fortune secured to them. An overflowing revenue and the unusual excitement of a popular war carried them triumphantly through their difficulties.

During the first session everything seemed to be going wrong. The Education Bill had to be withdrawn, the Workmen's Compensation Bill was not even proposed, the Irish Land Bill threatened to break up the party, the

**Failure of the
Education Bill,
May 1896.**

Agricultural Rating Bill was so manifestly "a special dole to a class" that it met with a very grudging reception. The Education Bill, the great failure of the session, was introduced by Sir John Gorst just before Easter, postponed apparently to allow the Ministers time to make up their own minds upon it. Their unanimity in fact was limited to one point, they desired to give assistance to those schools which had hitherto depended chiefly on voluntary subscriptions. The compromise effected by Mr. Forster's Bill of 1870 had not been palatable to the clergy. They had found themselves, as they believed, engaged in an unfair competition with the Board schools which could draw upon the bottomless purse of the rates, while they themselves depended upon the uncertain liberality of subscribers. At all events, it appeared unquestionable that the voluntary schools were not equal in excellence to the rate-supported schools, and many of them were only just able to fulfil the minimum requirements of the Educational Department. Instead however of pursuing in some simple method the object they had in view, the Government listened to the voice of those who had wider interests in education, and took the opportunity of linking their simple object to a great system of educational reform. Whether their plan was good or not, there can be no question that it was produced prematurely and without sufficiently securing the support of those chiefly interested in so highly contentious a measure. On moving the second reading, Sir John Gorst explained that the objects of the Bill were four: the raising of the poorer schools, whether they were voluntary or Board, to a level with their richer neighbours; the replacement of Church schools in rural districts where School Boards had been tried and failed; the establishment of a common authority for both primary and secondary schools, so that the two systems might be co-ordinated; and decentralisation of the existing system, so that the Educational Department might be relieved and greater elasticity be secured. The means by which these objects were to be secured was the establishment in every county, or county borough, of a general educational authority. This was to be the County Council acting through a committee created by itself, and in accordance with its views, and consisting of a majority of county councillors, the other members being either experts or representatives of educational bodies. The administration of the imperial grant was to be placed in its hands, and also the money received under the Local Taxation Act, commonly known as the spirit money. It was also to have the charge of technical instruction, industrial and

reformatory schools; and, with regard to secondary education, it might aid and establish new schools and take over the higher grade schools of the School Board. With respect to the grant, it was to be given in part as a special aid to necessitous Church schools, which were to receive from the Exchequer 4s. for every child in regular attendance. The limit of 17s. 6d. per child hitherto set to the grant from all sources was removed; and all elementary schools were exempted from the payment of rates. The age of school attendance was to be raised to 12 years. Finally, what Sir John Gorst described as a supplement to the conscience clause was introduced. If a reasonable number of parents required to have separate religious instruction given to their children, it was to be the duty of the managers to make arrangements for such instruction. In most respects the Bill was closely similar to the one which was subsequently (1903) passed. But it was so full of matters on which opinion might differ, it was so complete a revolution of the whole existing system, the security which it offered for the additional assistance of voluntary schools seemed so uncertain, the importation of sectarian religious teaching was so objectionable to many minds, that, even granting the acceptance of the fundamental principles, there still remained an infinite field of discussion. Nothing but the clearest comprehension and approval of the details, and a determined and whole-hearted support of them in Committee, could have carried the Bill successfully through the House. This comprehension and determination were notably wanting. The Government and its majority were by no means completely agreed; a hopeless confusion consequently arose, and the Government found it necessary to withdraw the Bill in a somewhat humiliating manner.

At all events they learnt wisdom by experience, and in the following session (January 19, 1897) they introduced a much simpler Bill, known as the Voluntary Schools Act. All schools were relieved from local rates, the 17s. 6d.

Voluntary
Schools Act,
March 1897.

limit was abolished, and an aggregate grant of 5s. per child was given to the voluntary schools. The distribution of this grant was left in the hands of the Educational Department, which was still to insist on the maintenance of voluntary subscriptions. The Bill very naturally created a bitter feeling, among Nonconformists who saw public money given to the support of Church schools, and among those constitutionalists who considered public control necessary where public money was concerned. However, by a somewhat profuse use of the closure, the Bill was forced through the House (March 25, 1897). The only

success on the part of the Opposition was the provision of a corresponding relief to necessitous Board Schools, which was secured by a separate Bill.

But although the Government had thus obtained the one point on which they were really bent, and had abandoned for the time the attempt at general legislation, the futile Bill of 1896 had not been without its importance. It was, though incomplete and unsuccessful, the expression of a feeling profoundly felt that the whole educational system required reorganisation. More elasticity in its lower branches, a greater opportunity for fitly supplying the very varying wants of different classes and different localities, a clearer definition of primary and secondary education, and the bringing of both into one co-ordinated system, were objects which not only educational experts, but all who were interested in the intellectual well-being of the people, were beginning to recognise as essential. It was felt that England was falling behind in intellectual progress, and in that scientific equipment on which pre-eminence in the keen competition of the world must ultimately rest. There might be many ways of obtaining the required results, and the contests of systems might be severe. But the Government was henceforward compelled to undertake the responsibility of deciding upon the most desirable plan, and of producing a measure which should satisfy the public demand. The plan was not produced until a new reign had begun; but tentative steps were taken, the direction of the proposed reform was clearly indicated, and the ground prepared for the final measure.

Thus in 1899 a Bill establishing a Board of Education was passed. It created a Board consisting of a President, and the Lord President of the Council, the principal Secretaries of State, the First Lord of the Treasury, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To this Board was handed over the work hitherto done by the Educational Department and the Department of Science and Art. A consultative committee was called into existence to advise the Board and to arrange for a register of teachers. The Board was authorised to inspect secondary schools in England. By this measure a long step was taken towards bringing primary and secondary education, including its technical branch, under one central power. The intermediate apparatus, the local authority, had still to be supplied. Another step in the right direction was taken when a Bill, brought in not by Government but by Mr. Robson a private member, raised the age from eleven to twelve as the earliest

**General desire
to improve
education.**

**Board of
Education Act,
1899.**

at which a child could leave school. In country districts the authority was allowed to fix even a higher age, with the proviso that between the age of eleven and thirteen only a limited number of attendances should be required.

It had been understood that the Government was pledged to introduce various improvements of a social character. The condition of the agricultural labourers had formed one of the topics of the Queen's Speech in 1896, and promises of relief had been held out. Nearly £1,000,000 was devoted to the purpose. It was distributed in the form of a grant in aid of the rates. Land was to be assessed not upon its whole rateable value. There was really no reason to believe that the agricultural classes alone suffered from injustice of rating. The proposal of the Government was in fact as the Opposition declared it to be, "a dole to the landed interest." It was after all a very small relief, not more than a shilling an acre; it was entirely indiscriminate, to the advantage of the rich farmer as well as to the needy. As Lord Rosebery insisted, it was the rent rather than the rates which should have been diminished; but such an argument in the House of Lords was not likely to carry weight. The Government pushed the Bill through, limiting its operation to five years, and followed it up with a commission of inquiry on local taxation, which should to all appearance more properly have preceded it. The gift to the Church schools had been severely censured as an instance of class legislation. It is difficult to regard the Agricultural Rating Act of 1896 in any other light. Several small measures for the amelioration of the working-classes were also passed; such as the Bill facilitating the purchase by the occupier of houses under the value of £400, and the Bill allowing municipal authorities to establish lodging-houses for the poor outside their boundaries, a tentative measure for relieving the ever-increasing pressure upon the centre of towns, but no large plan of improvement was set on foot.

**Agricultural
Rating Bill,
1896.**

The only important legislation of a social character was the Workmen's Compensation Bill. The mismanagement of the first session did not allow of its introduction; but in 1897 a Bill was brought in and passed. It was somewhat limited in extent, although fairly complete within those limits. Agricultural labourers, seamen, domestic servants, and workshops carried on without machinery were excluded from its action. In cases to which it applied, if accident caused a workman's death, his representatives could claim three years' wages, or £150, whichever

**Workmen's
Compensation
Bill, 1897.**

was the larger, up to £300. In case of incapacity caused by accident, the workman was to obtain half his wages if less than £1 weekly. The exclusion of so many classes roused much opposition, and eventually, in 1900, the Government so far altered their plan as to admit agricultural labourers. But the point in the Bill which was perhaps most warmly contested was the right given to the workman to make an arrangement with his employer by which he was excluded from the advantages of the Act. The great companies had schemes of their own for compensation which they believed fostered thrift and good feeling between employer and employed. The work of the great Friendly Societies had proved most valuable; and the Government, pledged by its very character to preserve rather than to reform, thought it undesirable to interfere in any way with such useful agencies. The right of "contracting out" formed therefore a part of the Bill, subject to the condition that the Friendly Society or scheme to which the workman so contracting out belonged must be certified by the Registrar of the Friendly Societies, as offering terms not less favourable than those secured by the Act. The Opposition on the other hand had on previous occasions refused to allow this freedom to the workmen, in the belief that any scheme of compensation unless universally obligatory would be inoperative in the hands of unscrupulous employers. In spite however of strong opposition, and of a wealth of friendly amendments which threatened to stifle it, the Bill passed through Committee with its chief principles unaltered, and became law.

The anomalous character of the government of London was another point which called for immediate attention. In creating the County Council and concentrating in its hands the administrative powers exercised by the various Boards in the Metropolis, true to their Conservative instincts the Ministry of 1888 had excluded the City from its jurisdiction. There were thus two distinct centres of authority, the old Corporation and the new County Council. This state of things was regarded as so undesirable that a strong feeling in favour of a junction of the two powers was prevalent, in spite of the obstacles to amalgamation presented by the antiquity and importance of the Corporation. On the other hand, it can scarcely be questioned that the County Council was becoming more powerful than the Government liked. Its majority was constantly Progressive, and the somewhat curious phenomenon was seen of an area returning a considerable majority of Unionist members to Parliament, yet represented in its local Council by men whose action exhibited strong democratic tendencies. To increase still further

**Government of
London Bill,
1899.**

the power of the County Council by amalgamating it with the City did not fall in with the Ministerial views; and the London Government Bill, one of the most important measures of the session of 1899, was conceived in that spirit of decentralisation which had already been shown elsewhere. The City of London remained intact with all its powers and privileges; the vast area over which the County Council exercised authority was broken up into municipalities or boroughs. Of these, sixteen were created at once, and arrangements made for the admission of others if demanded by circumstances. It seems difficult to regard it as a Bill for securing the unity of the government of London; for except in the last resort, the municipalities enjoyed almost complete independence. They had their mayor, their aldermen and councillors; no representatives of the central authority sat in their Council; they were at liberty to promote or oppose Bills in Parliament. Many alterations were admitted during the Committee stage; and on the question of the admission of women to the Councils there was much warm debate. The amendments on this point passed in the Commons were negatived in the Lords. 'To save the Bill, Mr. Balfour advised the acceptance of the Lords' amendments, and women were entirely excluded from the new machinery.

It was a period of ever-increasing revenue met by ever-increasing expenditure. The figures of the Budget had assumed a somewhat alarming appearance, when they rose to more than £100,000,000. The surplus however year by year seemed to justify the expenditure. Thus in 1896 the surplus amounted to £4,210,000; in 1897 to £1,660,000; in 1898 to £3,678,000; and in 1899 the result would have been equally satisfactory had it not been for the outbreak of the South African war. The wealth in the hands of Government enabled them to carry further that part of their policy which consisted in largely increasing the naval and military forces. It was not a policy belonging to any single party, at least as far as the navy was concerned.

Ever since the Naval Defence Act of 1889 it had been generally accepted that no reasonable expense must be spared to supply adequately the chief defensive power of the country. Since the production by Lord Spencer in 1894 of his shipbuilding programme, rapid progress had been made. It was now proposed by Mr. Goschen to add to the 105 ships and 62 torpedo boats already built 5 more battleships, 4 first-class, 3 second-class, and 6 third-class cruisers, and 28 torpedo boats. The cost would be about £10,000,000, spread over three years. At the same time the navy

**Prosperous
finances.**

**Increase of the
Navy.**

estimates were increased by £3,000,000, and reached the figure of £21,800,000. Besides this, by the Naval Works Bill the £8,500,000 which had been devoted to harbour defence in the preceding year was increased to £14,000,000. Great though the expenditure was, the proposition was well received both in the House and in the country. No new taxation was necessary, and the nation regarded with complacency the expenditure of no less than £55,000,000 upon its favourite force since Lord Spencer had put out his programme.

Although it may be said to have become a received opinion that the position of Great Britain among the nations of the world was to depend on its naval preponderance, the reorganisation and improvement of the army was not neglected. Though there could be no attempt to rival the great military powers of Europe, the extension of the empire gave constant employment to the army, and it was at all events desirable that, even though small, the army should be complete. Immediately on their accession to office the Government had taken advantage of the resignation of the Duke of Cambridge to introduce considerable changes in the War Office. Lord Wolsley was made Commander-in-Chief, with a military Board and consultative Council, the responsibility being centred in the Secretary for War. The limited power placed in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief, and the removal of much of his responsibility, subjected the plan to keen criticism. But the Government had their way. In their second session some £7,000,000 were, by the Military Works Act, and the Military Manœuvres Act, provided for the establishment of military ports and fortified harbours, and for the purchase of a large tract of country on Salisbury Plain to be set aside for manœuvres. A slight addition was also made to the total estimates of the year, but it was very slight. The expenditure upon the military and naval forces and the reorganisation of the War Office represented the general feeling both of the Government and the nation as to the national requirements during a time of peace, in the profound belief that the present peaceful condition of the empire would remain undisturbed. The greatness of the empire was recognised, the demands upon its defensive power by the colonies were understood, and, as it was believed, answered by the naval preparations. For frontier wars, and acquisitions in barbarous countries, the army was considered large enough.

The year 1899 produced a rude awakening. The special autumn session called to provide for the sudden outbreak of the South African war saw the beginning of that

Reorganisa-
tion of the War
Office.

Expenses of the
Boer War.

enormous expenditure upon the army which has added £150,000,000 to the National Debt. The beginning was small, for the fatal ignorance of the Government, their ridiculous misapprehension of the struggle in which they had engaged, had not as yet been proved. £10,000,000 it was thought would be sufficient, which might be readily supplied by a temporary loan. The War Office was indeed quite proud of the comparative speed with which it despatched a single army corps to the support of the slender armaments it had as yet thought right to send. As far as the movement of that army corps went, they were perhaps justified. The troops were landed in Africa rapidly and without mishap, though not without some signs of mismanagement. But no sooner did the war really begin than the insufficiency both of the English armament and organisation became evident. The call upon the nation was cheerfully responded to, the Yeomanry and Volunteers were organised. The colonies showed a keen comprehension of the imperial interests involved, and at once came forward with offers, and although at first they were told that infantry alone were wanted, in the course of a few months they were supplying some of the best of our mounted troops. The War Office had begun to see its mistakes. The British artillery was outraged; the rapidly moving horsemen and marksmen of the enemy were filling the prisons of Pretoria with English infantry. Then began an unchecked and lavish expenditure of money. Guns were bought even in Germany; horses, irrespective of their excellence, were swept in from all corners of the earth to be used and destroyed before they could become acclimatised. Soldiers unfit for service were hurried to the front. It seemed to be thought that mere numbers and unlimited money were all that was required to establish British supremacy. Though the war ended successfully, the Government and the War Office can scarcely claim credit, unless it be for the spark of wisdom which induced them to choose Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener to retrieve the disastrous beginning of the war.

A part of the general imperial policy which the Government followed, and which seems to have been an attempt to form under the Crown a body of federated self-governing States, was the completion of federative arrangements among the various small States into which our colonies in their process of growth had formed themselves. With the Dominion of Canada as an example, the various Australian colonies were encouraged to come to a federative arrangement among themselves, and it was not obscurely indicated that a process of the same sort would be very desirable

The imperial
policy.

sooner or later in South Africa. In Australia the attempt was crowned with success. England had really very little to do with it, the Federation was the work of the colonial statesmen. It is plain that such an idea of empire is full of difficulties. It is impossible to suppose that great self-governing clusters of colonies, allowed and encouraged to form themselves into what have all the appearance of independent States, would admit of much active interference or supervision from the mother country. Reciprocal advantages in the connection are still to seek, and the great difficulty, as far as England is concerned, is to retain any link of union except the sentimental one afforded by the person of the monarch. And so it proved with respect to Australia.

For a good many years attempts had been made by certain statesmen in Australia to bring about a federation of the colonies, an idea which had been fostered by the Colonial Office at home. The mutual jealousies of the various colonies had made it a matter of considerable difficulty to bring them to any common ground of union. Still greater was the difficulty when the question of federation with the mother country and participation of some sort in the administration of the empire was introduced into the discussion. Until the outbreak of the Boer war gave occasion for a hearty and unexpected exhibition of imperial loyalty, the most striking indication of its existence was found in the great Jubilee celebration of the sixtieth year of the Queen's reign in 1897. At the great festivals which accompanied it there had been collected representatives from all parts of the empire. Independent princes and protected princes from India had crowded to do homage to their suzerain. Self-governing and Crown colonies had joined in demonstrations of respect for their Queen. Mr. Chamberlain took advantage of the opportunity, and succeeded in bringing together in London all the Prime Ministers of the Australian colonies. A series of conferences was held, in which the great questions which had to be solved were discussed, not only with a view to local federation, but in relation to some wider scheme of imperial unity. He carefully refrained from defining any such scheme. He indicated the possibility of a zollverein or common tariff for the whole empire, the possibility of some central representative council, and the probable necessity of some distribution of the great burdens of empire. But he appears to have given the colonial Ministers clearly to understand that the work was theirs and not his, that it lay with them to bring about their own federation and to smooth their own intercolonial difficulties, intimating at the same

time that, when that was accomplished, the English Government would be ready to lend a sympathetic ear to any request for closer union. The Ministers returned without having advanced much further than before in their scheme of federation; but undoubtedly the conferences were not without effect. Before long Bills were passed in all the Australian Parliaments authorising federation; and after much intricate negotiation and many conferences, a scheme was arrived at and accepted in Australia subject to its approval by the Colonial Office in England.

The difficulty of finding a link with the mother country, which has already been mentioned, was at once apparent. In constituting themselves into a great commonwealth, the Australian colonies had no idea of allowing the practical independence they enjoyed to be overshadowed by the Home Government. The plan established a Federal Parliament, with a Senate formed by six senators from each State, and a House of Representatives elected in proportion to the population of the State. To the House of Representatives was left the power of the purse. The powers intrusted to the Federal Parliament were carefully defined. Free trade within the Commonwealth, common public services, uniform law, were definite parts of the scheme. The Constitution was completed and the junction with England secured by the appointment by the Queen of a Governor-General who was to be her representative; and this, in the draft scheme which was approved in Australia by the use of the Referendum, was in fact the only point of union. The right of appeal to the Queen in Council in any matter involving the interpretation of the constitution, or of the constitution of a State, unless the public interests of some part of her Majesty's dominion other than the Commonwealth or a single State were involved, was done away with. The connecting link therefore between the judicature of the colonies and the mother country was broken, and there seemed no security remaining for the uniformity of law within the empire. Upon this point there was a sharp struggle. Eventually a compromise was accepted, and the right of appeal to the Privy Council was allowed, if the cases brought to its cognizance were certified by the High Court of the Commonwealth as fitting subjects for its jurisdiction. With this alteration the Act was passed, and the Commonwealth was established by a proclamation issued by the Queen from Balmoral (September 17, 1900).

Foundation of
the Australian
Common-
wealth.

After the intense excitement which had attended the Home Rule Bills, and the constant recurrence of the Irish difficulty in an

aggravated form during the last twenty years, the small part it played in Lord Salisbury's last Ministry is somewhat surprising. This is said to be partly due to the sympathetic management of Mr. Morley during his tenure of office; but its continuance may more probably be traced to good seasons and commercial prosperity, to the overwhelming majority of the Unionists which deprived the Irish party in Parliament of much of its political importance, to the quarrels which broke up that party after the death of Mr. Parnell, and to a certain measure of success which attended the efforts of Government to secure the well-being of the people. It is remarkable that there had been for some years an unbroken growth in the deposits in the Irish savings banks. They had steadily increased from £4,710,000 in 1886 to £7,678,000 by the end of 1895. Two good harvests had also tended to the lessening of political discontent. The Unionist Ministry had therefore a fair field on which to try their new policy. They were moreover compelled, in this as in other respects, to make large concessions to the Liberal section whose adherence had secured their majority. Not only were measures taken which touched in various directions the comfort and wealth of the Irish, but legislation on Liberal lines, and indeed closely resembling that of their predecessors, though with certain modifications, was introduced.

The Land Law Bill which was passed in 1896 followed in many respects very exactly the Bill Mr. Morley had failed to pass in the preceding year. Its avowed object was to amend the legislation of 1881, and it consisted largely of alterations of a technical character in the procedure of the Land Commission in fixing rent. Mr. Morley had produced his measure because the first term of fifteen years was drawing to a close, and it had become necessary to fix the rents for another term of years; and before this was done he was desirous that the position of the tenant, more especially with respect to his interest in his own improvements, should be secured. The object of Mr. Gerald Balfour's Bill was practically the same as that of Mr. Morley. Several of the proposals in the previous Bill were accepted as non-contentious. On the other hand, there were others which were considerably modified. Thus the shortening of the statutory term during which the rent was to remain fixed was disallowed, and more restriction was placed upon the definition of "improvements." Further provisions for the extension and improvement of the Land Purchase Act of 1891 was also included. The object of that Act had been to increase the advances made by the imperial Government to aid the creation of a peasant

proprietorship. But while adding to the sum which could be advanced, the Conservative Government of the time appears to have been afraid of its too rapid employment; and the simplicity of the Ashbourne Act had been destroyed by complicated enactments. The effect had been to check more than was at all desirable the process which they regarded as the chief remedy for Irish discomfort. By the Ashbourne Act the tenant repaid the advance by an unvarying instalment at 4 per cent. for forty-nine years. By the Act of 1891 he repaid it in the same time, but by varying and uncertain instalments depending upon various highly technical arrangements. By the present Act the tenant was to pay for ten years a maximum instalment at the rate of 4 per cent.; part of this was interest, part was replacing of capital. At the end of ten years so much of the capital as had been replaced was to be deducted from the sum on which interest was paid. The whole instalment would therefore decrease; for while the replacement continued the same, the interest became less. It was calculated that by this arrangement about sixty-nine years would be required before the instalments would cease. Though the length of time over which the repayment was spread was likely to act as a deterrent to purchase, the certain maximum and the steady decrease were distinct advantages. It was not however upon the purchase clauses that any difficulty arose. Although considerably modified as compared with those of the 1895 Bill, the clauses in favour of the tenant appeared to the landlords still to be serious encroachments on their already diminished rights; and not unnaturally they were deeply disappointed at what they considered the ill-treatment meted out to them by their own friends. Mr. Balfour could not shut his eyes to their threatened opposition, or to the obvious danger that they might find opportunity in the House of Lords of wrecking the Bill altogether. He therefore inserted several amendments in their favour while the Bill was in Committee. The effect of these changes upon the Irish Nationalists was immediate. The split among them was for the moment healed in a general and eager opposition to the Bill. It became only too clear that a Bill which had been intended as a message of peace would have to be forced through the House in the teeth of a united Irish party. This would have been so entirely opposed to the avowed policy of the Government of "killing Home Rule by kindness," that a fresh change of face was made; the new amendments were withdrawn, and the landlords, left in the lurch, could again complain that the provisions with respect to tenants' improvements "reduced their land to prairie value." Joining their forces with the Nationalists, they succeeded in

putting the Government in a minority on one point of no great importance. Their success was but momentary; the Government majority was too strong to be resisted even when weakened by this defection, and the Land Bill got through the Commons (July 29).

In the Upper House the landlords found more room for opposition. Led by Lord Londonderry, they contrived to defeat the Government on more than one clause, though still declaring that they had no intention of destroying the Bill. Amendments were introduced, to which the Commons, when the Bill came back to them, refused to agree. The rebel Lords however had no wish to drive measures to extremity. They withdrew their opposition, contented themselves with expressing their strong dislike to the Bill, and allowed it to pass, on the last day of the session, August 13, 1896.

More important, and still more characteristic of the policy of Government, was the legislation of 1898 and 1899. Immediately after the Address in 1898, Mr. Gerald Balfour introduced what was to be the great measure of the session, the extension of Local Government to Ireland. As in England, County Councils and District Councils and Boards of Guardians were to be established, but not Parish Councils. The members were to be elected on a broad franchise identical with the Parliamentary franchise, except that Peers and women might vote. The County Councils were to take over the duties hitherto performed by the grand juries, except in the matter of criminal law. The District Councils were charged with the work hitherto done by the authorities of the baronies. In respect to finance, the principle of the Agricultural Rating Act was applied to Ireland, and £730,000 a year was to be paid to it out of the imperial exchequer. The occupier was to be relieved of the payment of half the county cess, the owner to be relieved of half the poor rate. In addition to this, £200,000 a year, the products of the local licence duties, and an additional grant of £79,000 were to be given. The result was expected to be that the new authorities would have a surplus of £35,000 after meeting the charges to which they were liable.

The Bill, which was passed without much opposition, had much the appearance of a substitute for Home Rule. This Mr. Balfour declared that it was not. It was introduced, he said, merely as a matter of administrative convenience. However this may be, it undoubtedly put more power in the hands of the Irish and of the Nationalist party. A very small percentage of the old members of the grand jury found seats on the new Councils, which were for the most part constituted

Irish Local
Government
Bill.

of men inexperienced in administrative business. It can afford no cause for surprise that here and there unwise excesses of party feeling were seen, in nothing perhaps more notably than in the violent resolutions passed in not a few of the newly established Councils in favour of the Boers during the South African War. It is more to be wondered at that in a large majority of cases the Councils set to work with an apparent determination to execute their new duties with thoroughness, and on the whole succeeded in so doing. The smoothness with which the new arrangements worked and the general satisfaction which they gave speak highly for Mr. Gerald Balfour's skill.

Success of the
Bill.

Words had been dropped in the debate which led to an uneasy feeling that the Local Government Act was intended to be an alternative for other measures of a curative description which had been suggested. This did not prove to be the case. In the following year a new Department of Agriculture, Industries, and Technical Instruction was created for Ireland. The object was to develop the resources of the country and to teach the people how to use them. The first Vice-President was Mr. Horace Plunkett. This appointment was an official recognition of the excellent work he had for some time been carrying on. At his persuasion an Irish Agricultural Organisation Society had been formed, and had pressed upon the people with great success the principles of industrial co-operation. The work had begun in 1897, and had spread with extraordinary rapidity—87 Agricultural Societies, with a membership of 9000, and 155 Dairy Societies, with a membership of 20,000, were under its control by December, 1898. The output of butter between April 1897 and December 1898 was 4000 tons, valued at £353,850. As a part of the same movement, 41 Credit Banks, properly safeguarded, had been established for the benefit of borrowers. By the Act of 1899, the Vice-President was to be *ex officio* member of the Congested Districts Board, and the Department was to take over agriculture, fisheries, and education, under special Acts. An income of about £160,000 a year was secured to it.

Irish Agri-
cultural
Department.

A certain pedantry and want of tact obscured the real excellence of much of Mr. Gerald Balfour's administration. Unfortunate words, when speaking of the wants of the people during a time of great distress, excited bitter anger, and he left office (November 1900) without having won any liking from the landlord party, whose interests, as they believed, he had betrayed, or from the people, whose feelings he had

not sufficiently considered. It remained for a more gracious personage, Mr. Wyndham, in subsequent years to reap the fruit of Mr. Balfour's work, and so far to ingratiate himself with all classes as apparently to bring within sight a friendly solution to the bitter struggle which had so long torn the unfortunate country.

As in his former administrations, Lord Salisbury had retained the Foreign Office in his own hands. Considering the large **Salisbury's foreign policy.** crop of foreign questions which immediately, and somewhat unexpectedly, assaulted the Unionist Ministry, this was no doubt fortunate for the country. His sagacious, well-instructed, and peace-loving mind precluded all idea of that aggressive imperialism which had been the dread of former generations of Liberals. His policy of conciliation, stretched as it was sometimes thought even to an extreme, but which was in fact tempered by a very adequate view of the maintenance of British rights, carried the country through great external difficulties, and left the question of empire to be chiefly treated as a domestic question and in the hands of the Colonial Secretary.

Among the many foreign complications which required all Lord Salisbury's careful handling to unravel, one of the most **Venezuela boundary difficulty.** important was the dispute as to the frontier between Venezuela and British Guiana, a dispute which seemed at one time to threaten a serious quarrel with the United States. The question itself was of long standing, and far from simple. British Guiana had passed to the English from Holland by the Treaty of 1814. The Dutch had obtained this land from Spain, and their possession appears to have been ratified by an extradition treaty between the two countries, signed at Aranjuez in 1791. Had the limits of the country been carefully defined in either of these treaties, no difficulty would have arisen. The English were obviously the possessors of all that the Dutch had possessed, irrespective of any former claims of Spain. It was not until twenty years after the English treaty with Holland that the insurgents of Venezuela had won their independence and formed their Republic. But they assumed the position of being—as it were the heirs of the Spaniards, and advanced claims to territories which, though never effectively held, had no doubt belonged to Spain under the well-known Bull by which Pope Alexander VI. at the close of the fifteenth century had partitioned the new world between the Spaniards and Portuguese. But though the occupation of the country south of the Orinoco had been intrusted to the Capuchin Friars, their furthest settlement had advanced but little beyond their starting-point.

From 1836, when the Republic of Venezuela was officially recognised by England, discussions on the boundaries had been repeatedly renewed. In 1840 Sir Robert Schomburgk was employed to define the boundary on geographical lines; but as this was done by the authority of the English Government alone, the definition had not the force of a treaty. In 1850 it was agreed that no occupation of the disputed territory should be permitted by either country, but by extraordinary carelessness the limits of the disputed country were again left undefined. Some years later gold was discovered in the district, and the Venezuelans, disregarding the arrangement of 1850, which seems indeed to have been obeyed by neither party, occupied the land, and, for the purpose of securing the assistance of the United States, made large concessions in it to American citizens. They now raised all their old pretensions, refused to acknowledge the Schomburgk line, and included in their demands country already occupied and administered by England. When the matter was first treated by Lord Salisbury in 1886, he had declared, and had issued a proclamation to that effect, that the English colonists would be assured of protection within the Schomburgk line. It was not however the question of boundary which was really important, but the complication in which it involved England with the United States. It seemed for a moment as though there could be no solution short of war. What is known is the Monroe doctrine lay at the bottom of this entanglement. When the Republics of South America were still young and only half established, it had seemed by no means improbable that the "Holy Alliance" might intervene in favour of the Bourbon monarchy, an event which the United States regarded as disastrous. George Canning, the consistent friend of the new American Republics, suggested that the interference of Europeans with the settlement of America might be regarded as inadmissible. President Monroe took up the theory, and in his presidential address of 1823 formulated it. This doctrine thus suggested by Canning and adopted by President Monroe in 1823 declared that America would regard any interference on the part of European Powers with the progress or development of the Republican States of South America as an unfriendly act. At first merely an assertion of policy, the words had crystallized in the minds of American politicians into a doctrine with the validity of international law. The shifty Governments of the small South American Republics saw the advantage which it gave them, and in their constant financial quarrels with European countries from whence their capital was chiefly drawn,

*History of the
dispute from
1836.*

*The Monroe
doctrine.*

habitually attempted to shelter themselves under the power of the United States.

Thus in the present instance Venezuela succeeded in raising to a very high pitch the anti-English feeling of the ultra-patriotic Americans. President Cleveland and his secretary, Mr. Olney, perhaps shared this feeling; at all events they took advantage of it; and England was astonished to hear words amounting to a serious threat fall from the lips of the President in a formal message to Congress. Both the message and the despatch of the Secretary which preceded it seemed to take it for granted that the English must be wrong, and that their object was the appropriation of other people's territory. Arbitration over the whole matter in dispute was demanded. But as the English Government had already declared itself as to the territory lying within the Schomburgk line, and as the despatch was accompanied with an obvious threat, the difficulty appeared insoluble. Lord

**Lord Salis-
bury's able
management.**

Salisbury, after some delay, replied in an able despatch, explaining the Monroe doctrine, and declining arbitration except within definite limits. With great wisdom he avoided an angry rejoinder; he recognised that Mr. Cleveland's demonstration was a political flourish intended to win votes at the approaching Presidential election, and relied on the good sense both of the Americans and English not to press matters to extremity. Nor was he mistaken in his view. The mere chance of war had a disastrous effect on the financial position of America; a monetary crisis and panic occurred, the temper of the people underwent a complete change, and the President's threat proved fatal to his own re-election. Firmness and tact on both sides, and the able management of the question by the English ambassador, Sir Julian Pauncefort, enabled the countries to escape from the apparent dilemma. Nay more, the representatives of the two countries agreed upon a general treaty for submitting all future disputes to arbitration. Though the American Senate at first refused to ratify it, its principles were carried out in the dispute with Venezuela. A Commission and an umpire were appointed, with instructions to settle the boundary, subject only to the limitation that there should be no transference on either side of properties already occupied. Two years later, in October 1899, when the arbitration was completed, it appeared that on nearly every point the English pretensions had been justified. At the same time, American susceptibilities had been saved. The United States had been allowed to appear as mediator, and as the whole of the British demands had not been granted, it was possible for the Americans to believe that their interference had not been useless.

The heritage of difficulties laid upon Lord Salisbury was not confined to the West. On entering office he had found the affairs of Turkey and the East in a condition so critical that war seemed scarcely to be avoided. In 1894 all Europe had been shocked by terrible stories of Turkish atrocities in Armenia. A quarrel between the Armenians and Kurds in the mountains south of Erzeroum had ripened, after the arrival of Turkish troops, into a ruthless attack upon the Armenian inhabitants of the plain, and their destruction under circumstances of extreme barbarity. Stories of the most revolting cruelty, possibly somewhat exaggerated, came to the ears of Sir Philip Currie, the English ambassador at Constantinople. He at once remonstrated strongly with the Sultan, and received the hearty support of Lord Kimberley, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Sultan however took up the position which he maintained throughout the quarrel; that, just as the countries in Europe found it necessary to take measures against anarchists and Socialists, so he was obliged to repress the Armenians who were threatening his State with revolution; but he consented to set on foot the semblance of an inquiry, with the result that the massacres were absolutely denied. Totally disbelieving this denial, Lord Kimberley considered it his duty to attempt to give some reality to the article of the Berlin Treaty of 1878, by which the Porte had promised to carry into effect without delay such reforms as were required in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians. For this purpose he called to fresh life the concert of Europe, and invited all the great Powers to co-operate with him in forcing reforms upon the Porte. Russia and France alone took an active part in the movement; Germany and Austria, though consenting, stood aloof. A new Commission of Inquiry, issued under pressure and including representatives of the European Powers, failed to make a satisfactory report. It was indeed obvious that the Turkish members of the Commission were determined to make the inquiry nugatory. Enough however transpired to enable the European representatives to assure their Governments that there had been no insurrection for the Turkish troops to suppress, and that their employment in support of the Kurds had been accompanied with atrocious cruelty.

The very *raison d'être* of the concert was the mutual jealousy of the Powers and their fear that the Eastern question might precipitate a great European convulsion, and it was impossible to expect any vigorous action from such an alliance. As this was quite evident to the Sultan, he could afford to regard their threats as idle thunder. He took no step to restore order in Armenia, and the massacres continued, spreading

ever wider and wider among the provinces of Asia Minor. Lord
Lord Kimber- Kimberley did his best. With the aid of Sir Philip
ley's efforts, Currie a scheme of reform, admitting Christians to a
1895. considerable share in the local administration, was
 drawn up and approved by the Powers. But the Sultan showed no
 intention of accepting the scheme or even of replying to their demand
 that it should be accepted. The anger of the English people was
 roused. Lord Kimberley began to lose patience; he went so far as to
 tell the Russian ambassador in England that "further delay would
 compel him to have recourse to methods of restraint." This was too
 much for the Russian Minister, Prince Lobanoff, who was already
 alarmed lest the infection of revolution should make its way among
 the Armenians dwelling in Russian territory. Either really dreading
 or pretending to dread the formation of a privileged and self-governing
 nationality in the heart of Asia Minor, he now declared that nothing
 would induce Russia to join in such active measures of compulsion
 as were implied in Lord Kimberley's words. Against such divided
 opponents the Sultan felt himself strong. His answer, which was
 received on the 3d of June, could be regarded as nothing less than an
 absolute refusal of the scheme of reform.

England now stood to all intents and purposes alone. Russia would
 give no active assistance; France was certain to follow in the wake of
 Russia; while both Germany and Austria were determined not to risk
 a disturbance which might bring on a European war. Lord Kimberley
 however stood firm; he declared that, either with or without the other
 Powers, the English Government could not repudiate the duty laid
 upon them by the Berlin Treaty. He even ventured to propose an
 ultimatum, and to seek once more, though it must have been without
 hope, for the co-operation of the other Powers. Prince Lobanoff
 appeared to agree, but declared that it was at all events necessary to
 refer the proposal for the consideration of the Czar.

While this measure was still under discussion, the wholly unexpected
 and trivial vote in the English House of Commons with-
 respect to the supply of cordite produced a Ministerial
 crisis, and obliged the energetic Minister to leave the
 unfinished question in the hands of his successor. It seems certain
 that but for that curious incident England would have entered single-
 handed upon the task of bringing the Porte to reason; and, considering
 the lukewarm attitude of Russia, it is unlikely that the Porte would
 have yielded, at any rate without a severe struggle.

Lord Salisbury, who took up the quarrel at this critical moment, was

**Change of
 Ministry, July
 1895.**

a statesman of the old school, believing in the powers of diplomacy, and that the first duty of that art was the avoidance of war. Entirely devoid of sentiment, cynical and somewhat fatalistic in his views, he was not gravely touched

Lord Salisbury's diplomacy.

by the condition of the Armenians, and certainly regarded their sufferings as an evil not to be compared in magnitude with that of a great European war. The backbone of his policy was the maintenance of that agreement between the Powers which appeared to be on the point of dissolution. There was no necessity for hurried action; the circumstances of his unexpected restoration to office afforded very valid reasons for delay. While therefore he declared generally that he accepted the action of the late Government, he proceeded as a first step to attempt the repair of the broken concert. His great authority, and the esteem in which he was held as a European statesman, enabled him to succeed where Lord Kimberley had failed. It was thus with the joint weight of the three great Powers that the reforms were again pressed upon the Sultan. But it soon became evident that this co-operation was only temporary, and that it could only be purchased at the price of inaction; for when once more an answer was returned from the Porte, yielding indeed on some small points; but entirely ignoring the real principles of the scheme, Lord Salisbury found himself in the selfsame dilemma as Lord Kimberley. Again the choice was presented of attempting single-handed compulsion, or of adopting a patient diplomacy which was likely enough to end in defeat. He accepted the latter alternative, and for a moment it seemed as if his patience was to be rewarded. He devised a new scheme, the prominent feature of which was a mixed commission of Europeans and Turks charged with the duty of watching the Government in the disturbed districts. The Sultan liked this scheme even less than that of Lord Kimberley, but finding that the Powers were unanimous in urging it upon him, he eluded the necessity of accepting it by issuing a reform scheme of his own, which ostensibly secured to the Christians a considerable share of self-government.

It appeared at the time to be a complete diplomatic triumph. But Lord Salisbury was not deceived; he recognised the difference between words and deeds, and it was in reference to these very promises that he uttered a gloomy and even threatening speech at Guildhall on the 9th of November. "While I readily admit," he said, "that it is quite possible for the Sultan of Turkey, if he will, to govern all his subjects in justice and in peace, he is not exempt more than any other potentate from the law that injustice will bring the highest on

earth to ruin." The mistrust thus expressed drew a letter from the Sultan, almost pathetic in its terms, declaring his honest intentions. Yet the Prime Minister's incredulity was fully justified. Even at this very time frightful massacres were occurring wherever Armenians or Christians were in any numbers. The stories are far too terrible and too numerous to be given: 400 Armenians killed at Erzeroum, 1300 at Bipert, 200 villages sacked in the neighbourhood of Van, 1100 Christians murdered with every circumstance of wickedness in the town of Diarbekir; such were the reports which were constantly arriving. On the whole, it is said that 25,000 lost their lives in this year, and this, not in wild uproars, but by more or less organised attacks of Turkish soldiers, and by the connivance of Turkish officials.

Remonstrance was unavailing; the same answer was always ready, that the Armenians were anarchical conspirators, and that the anger of the loyal Mussulman was roused beyond restraint by the meddlesome support afforded by the Christian Powers to their co-religionists. Single-handed, England could do nothing; and Russia persistently declined to take action. There was therefore no check to the work of destruction, and the position of the unfortunate Armenians appeared hopeless. Diplomatic action can never be successful unless there lie behind it the forces of war. Threatening but afraid to strike, encouraging but afraid to help, the European Powers did but play into the hands of their adversary. Rendered desperate by unsatisfied hopes, and still half believing that assistance would be given them, the more violent spirits among the Armenians broke into open rebellion. There was something of truth in the Turkish assertion as to the existence of a secret revolutionary society. In August

**Outbreak in
Constanti-
nople.**

1896 its members threw aside all caution; explosions of bombs and dynamite took place in many parts of Constantinople, and the Ottoman Bank was occupied by the insurgents. The excuse long waited for had now been put into the hands of the Sultan. The soldiery and the mob made common cause, and for two days the streets of Constantinople were a scene of horrible pillage and butchery in which some 5000 Christians are said to have perished. This outbreak of the Armenians in Constantinople itself, proving to all appearance the reality of the alleged revolutionary society, disarmed even their European friends. No satisfactory reply could be given when the Sultan issued a note, declaring that his merciful reforms had been rejected by his rebellious subjects, who would be satisfied with nothing short of an administrative self-government such

as would practically break up his empire, a disaster to which he could never submit. The tables were indeed turned when the note closed with a demand for the extradition of the refugees, and a charge against Europe of harbouring revolutionists.

Never was there a more complete failure than that which had attended the efforts of the European concert to save or to avenge the wretched victims of Turkish misrule.

But if in his extreme desire to avoid war, his dread of European complications, and his belief in the power of his own diplomacy, Lord Salisbury had been betrayed into ^{Insurrections in Crete.} adopting a course which had led to signal failure, his efforts were somewhat more successful in another and similar case which arose at the same time. The Christians and Mahomedans in the isle of Crete stood on more equal terms than in Asia Minor. The Cretans in fact had never been thoroughly subdued; resistance to Turkish misrule was there traditional. Driven to insurrection in 1895, they had been for the time suppressed. But in the summer of the following year the island was again a scene of anarchy. There was thus another opportunity for the interference of the European concert, and, acting at first together, the Powers were successful. The Cretan insurgents demanded that the Governor of the island should be a Christian, that the Turkish troops should be confined to certain fortresses, and that a predominant share of the administration should be placed in Christian hands. The Powers pressed these reforms upon the Porte; and the Sultan was compelled to yield and to promulgate a constitution more or less in accordance with the wishes of the insurgents. But reforms in Turkey, carried out upon the authority of the Sultan, appear always to have the same result: no advantage accrues to the Christians for whose benefit they are intended; the Mahomedans break out in anger and have recourse to outrage; the Government is either unable or unwilling to bring them to order. Thus it happened now in Crete. A weak Christian Governor, a strong Turkish Commander-in-Chief, an abundant use of Turkish troops, soon produced wild commotion. In order to localise the disturbance the Mediterranean fleets of the various Powers gathered round the island, although the formation of a complete cordon round it was not carried out. But it was not from the fleets of the great Powers that the Cretans hoped to receive material assistance. The country with which they were naturally most in sympathy was Greece, and it was to Greece that they now appealed for help in their distress. Foolishly overrating its strength, and perhaps believing that its action would

rendered the war innocuous, the Powers were naturally inclined to be tender to the Greek interests. Lord Salisbury took a prominent part in arranging the terms of peace, and limiting the large demands which success encouraged Turkey to advance. Thessaly was restored to Greece, and peace was purchased by a rectification of the frontier and a payment of a war indemnity of £4,000,000. As a preliminary step, Greece promised to resign all claims on Crete and to accept the establishment of an autonomous Government.

Thus the interest of the question returned back to the island. There seemed every prospect of an interminable dispute as to the person to whom the government should be intrusted. After much discussion, Russia ventured to propose Prince George of Greece. It was impossible that such a proposition should be at once favourably received. The dissensions among the Powers were the opportunity of the Turks, there was no withdrawal of troops from the island while the wrangling went on. At last what threatened to become a deadlock was solved somewhat unexpectedly by the breaking up of the concert. The German Emperor, who had throughout held a strong view in opposition to Greece, took umbrage not only at the proposition of the Russian candidate, but at the disregard paid on more than one occasion to his advice, and repudiated all further share in concerted action. He was followed by Austria. The remaining Powers felt obliged to act, and gave their admirals instruction to set up the autonomous Government at once. But the Turkish troops were still not withdrawn, for the Porte had not unnaturally grown less submissive amid the quarrels of the allies. On the 6th of September the Mahomedans went so far as to attack a British force in Crete, and several officers and men were killed and wounded. Admiral Noel could no longer endure the restraints of diplomacy. He bombarded the town and demanded the instant withdrawal of the Turkish troops. Thus Lord Salisbury's hand was forced; it was impossible for him to refuse to support the action of his admiral. He was compelled to declare that in the last resort England would act alone. The mere threat was sufficient, the Powers of the concert were at once roused to action. Admiral Noel undertook the civil administration of Crete, and under the escort of British troops the Turks were marched out of the island. There was no longer any difficulty in carrying out the necessary changes, and on December 21, 1897, Prince George landed and took over the government. His success seemed complete. Peace and order began to find a place in the troubled island.

The action of Lord Salisbury had been throughout the Eastern

Settlement of
Crete.

question directed entirely to the preservation of peace; so much so that there were not a few of his political opponents who considered that he had been too conciliatory, and accused him of allowing England to be dragged ignominiously in the wake of the other members of the European concert. This was a complaint which **Affairs in Egypt.** could at all events not be made against the conduct of the Ministry in respect to Egypt. Both political parties were pledged to ultimate withdrawal from that country, but the moment when that pledge should be redeemed appeared to be left to the judgment of each successive English Ministry. To the party now in power the lengthened occupation of the high road to India seemed, from an imperial point of view, to be of the greatest importance. The work of the English had without doubt been highly salutary, and there was no difficulty in finding a plausible excuse for continuing the occupation. It might not unreasonably be said, as Mr. Balfour did say when declaring the position of the Government in this matter, that the condition of Egypt could not be regarded as satisfactory until control had been re-established over the Soudan. That is to say, the condition on which the pledge of withdrawal rested could not be fulfilled till Egypt had regained the provinces conquered by the Dervishes in 1886. The occasion of this clear declaration of policy was a vote of censure moved by Mr. Morley, when it had become known that preparations were made for the advance of the Egyptian and British troops in March 1896.

The immediate causes for the action of the Government appear to have been two—the one to assist the Italians, the other to free the Egyptian frontier from a possible assault of the Mahdi's troops. The Italian attempt to play their part in the general game of territorial expansion which was going on, by establishing a colonial province on the Red Sea, had brought them into contact with Abyssinia; their army had been severely handled at Adowa, and at the same time their fortress of Kassala was threatened by the Dervishes. From this danger the English advance would probably relieve them. The Egyptian frontier was at present fixed at Wady Halfa, but it seemed almost certain that the invasion of the Mahdists would be continued, and the frontier be driven still further back. A defence upon offensive lines appeared the wisest course to adopt. Sir Herbert Kitchener, the Sirdar of the Egyptian army, had therefore received instructions to move southward, and on the 20th of March he crossed the existing frontier line, and pushed on to Akasheh, on the way to Dongola.

The Soudan Campaign, 1896.

Considerable difficulty had been found in obtaining the money for the expedition. The probability of complications with the European powers became evident from the first. Freedom of action in Egypt was seriously hampered by the arrangements which had been entered into at the time of the liquidation of the Egyptian debt; France and Russia had refused to allow Egypt to draw the half million necessary for the expedition from the "Caisse de la dette." They even went to law upon the subject, and won their case both before the mixed tribunals and on appeal. England however solved this difficulty by advancing the money, though not without an interchange of words which were scarcely friendly with the French Ministry.

The Sirdar's march was a complete success. The railway was pushed on as he advanced, gunboats accompanied him, and before the end of the year 1896 the town and province of Dongola were again united to Egypt. It is not clear that the Government had determined to reconquer the whole Soudan when they began their operations; it would seem in fact that the movement was somewhat tentative. The success which attended it allowed them to form a more definite determination, and in the following year it became certain that the expedition would not stop short of Khartoum. Very slowly, but very surely, the Sirdar advanced up the river, still creating the railway behind him as he went. The whole of 1897 was employed in preparations. The capture of outposts, the exploration of the river by the gunboats, the continuous advance of the railway, and the renewal of friendly relations with the inhabitants, paved the way for the final assault upon the heart of the Mahdist empire. In 1898 the blow so ably prepared fell. A brilliant victory on the Atbara (April 8) rendered the possession of the province of Berber secure; and as the autumn approached, the army, which had been concentrated for a final effort, came in sight of Omdurman. The Dervishes moved out to meet them. An attack on all sides was made on the British position and maintained with heroic bravery for several hours. The Dervishes were however compelled to withdraw, and the Egyptian army continued its advance towards the town. They were again, while on their march, suddenly assaulted upon their right flank with extraordinary vehemence, and disaster was only averted by the able arrangements of Colonel Hector Macdonald and the firmness of the British troops under his command. The destruction of life was great. It is probable that the victorious advance of the native Egyptian troops was marked by acts of

Kitchener's
march to
Khartoum.

Battle of
Omdurman,
Sept. 2, 1898.

cruelty not allowed in civilised warfare; but the temptation to kill the wounded, who it was well known were ready to fire at the backs of the troops as they advanced, was irresistible, and affords much excuse for the unusual destruction of life. It was the last effort of the Dervishes. Omdurman was undefended, the Mahdist empire was virtually at an end. The toil and skill of the English officers who had been intrusted with the reformation of the Egyptian Army since 1882 had been rewarded, the native soldiers had proved themselves under such leading formidable and trustworthy troops.

The business of re-establishing the old limits of the Egyptian empire had been done well, but it was not to be expected that it would meet with approval in Europe. The triumphant close of the expedition seemed likely to be but the prelude of a great war with France. Instructions had been given to the Sirdar to take measures to secure all the provinces which had once belonged to Egypt, and it was hoped that he would effect a junction with an expedition under Colonel James Macdonald, which was making its way northward from the

The French at Fashoda. Uganda Protectorate. The union of the Anglo-Egyptian sphere of influence with the district of Lake Victoria would have gone far towards realising the dream of African empire which Mr. Rhodes had briefly summed up when he declared his hope of seeing an English railway running from the Cape to Cairo. Fanciful though the dream may have been, it had taken great hold of the public mind, and the victorious reoccupation of the Soudan seemed to bring it almost within reach. Great therefore was the shock when news arrived in England that the Sirdar, in his progress southward, had arrived at Fashoda and found a fort flying the French flag, and held by Captain Marchand, a French officer. A slight failure in judgment, a little over hasty self-assertion which would not have been unnatural in a commander stopped in his victorious career by an obstacle apparently so trivial, might have produced disastrous results. But Lord Kitchener, conscious of the extreme awkwardness of the situation, carefully avoided any act of war. As a matter of fact his arrival had saved the French expedition from destruction, for not only were its provisions exhausted, but it was threatened by the Dervishes in overwhelming numbers. He asked Captain Marchand to proceed to Cairo, but on his refusal he allowed him to remain unmolested with the French flag still flying over his fort, and contented himself with hoisting the Egyptian flag and stationing a large body of troops in the immediate neighbourhood. The incident itself, with the fearful issues involved in it, he regarded

as too important to be treated on his own authority, and he wisely left the further steps to be taken to the decision of the Governments of England and France, in order that it might be treated as an international question.

The incident of Fashoda was but an extreme instance of a policy long pursued by the French; for in the colonial aggression of the time the French had taken a leading part, and had found a field for their activity in North Africa. They had claimed as their "sphere of influence" the whole of the "hinterland" lying behind their colonies of Algeria and Tunis, and extending as far as Lake Chad. The claim had been accepted, and a line had been drawn for their southern boundary, from Sey on the Niger to Barua on the south-west side of Lake Chad, beyond which line the English "sphere of influence" under the management of the Niger Company began. The difficulties in the way of approaching Lake Chad from the north were almost insurmountable. But the French also had colonies on the west coast, Senegal and Senegambia, and Dahomey further to the south. And though recognising the Sey-Barua line as the southern limit of the "hinterland" of Algeria, they held themselves at liberty to work eastward and northward from their west-coast settlements so as to lap round the English colony of Lagos, and to obtain command of the Upper Niger on the southern side of this accepted line. The frontier between the French in Dahomey and the English in Lagos had been settled as far as the 11th parallel; and the understanding of the English was that this line, which ran straight northward from Porto Novo on the coast, was to be continued to Sey. The French however, very anxious for an outlet upon the navigable Upper Niger, had pushed in between the 11th parallel and Sey, and had even crossed the Niger and established posts in what had been the country of Sokoto, which was undeniably under English influence. Negotiations had been entered into on this point, and a Convention had been drawn up, by which the English allowed their frontier line to end at Ilo on the Niger, the district intervening between Ilo and Sey falling to France. Six months had been allowed for the ratification of this Convention, and it was still uncompleted when the battle of Omdurman took place.

But besides their northern and their western colonies, the French claimed a considerable territory above the Congo. From this also they had pushed eastward and were establishing themselves on the Ubangi. It was from this furthest province that they had despatched Captain Marchand's

French encroachments in West Africa.

French encroachments in the valley of the Nile.

party for the purpose of securing for themselves an uninterrupted exit upon the Nile. Up to this time they had in this direction been only occupying what might be considered as lying legitimately within their sphere of influence. But secret instructions had more than once been given to their officials to push on down the river Bahr-el-Ghazal and secure their connection with the Nile. It seems impossible to deny that in thus acting they were wilfully taking what they knew full well would be regarded by England as a hostile step. For again and again the English Government had declared openly their claim to exert a sole and paramount influence over the valley of the Nile. In the Treaty with Germany of 1890, and subsequently while treating both with Italy and the Congo State, the declaration had been made without any objection from France; and in 1895 Sir Edward Grey, Under Secretary of State, had taken the opportunity of a forward movement on the part of M. Léotard, the Governor of Ubangi, to utter a formal protest in the House of Commons, and to declare in words understood by all diplomatists to be of the gravest import, that "any attempt to encroach upon the Nile valley would be regarded as an unfriendly act."

It was impossible for Lord Salisbury to disregard the claim thus publicly made, or to let himself be drawn into negotiations on the subject. He at once took up a firm position, demanding the immediate removal of Marchand, and declining even to listen to the arguments of the French; for Monsieur Delcassé, the French Minister, attempted to vindicate his action by arguments which were really trivial. At first he denied that the Marchand expedition was an expedition at all; the captain was merely "an emissary of civilisation," sent forward by M. Léotard; but the equipment of the expedition did not allow of such a construction. He then urged that the valley of the Bahr-el-Ghazal had become, after the withdrawal of the Egyptians in 1886, a "no man's land," open to the occupation of any Power. The French had however on more than one occasion declared, and claimed credit for the declaration, that they would not allow the temporary loss of these provinces to invalidate the permanence of the Khedive's right over them. They had on this plea ejected the officials of the Congo State, and obliged the Belgians to relinquish a lease which they had contracted with the Egyptians; but indeed it was scarcely the weakness of their own arguments which obliged them to give way. It was plain from every utterance of the public men of all parties in England that the country would support Lord Salisbury even though he brought on a war. The

**The French
withdraw from
Fashoda.**

French Government thought it wise to yield to this demonstration and withdrew from Fashoda. Lord Salisbury was able to say (November 4, 1898), in the Guildhall, that the immediate crisis was passed. "A cause of controversy of an acute and somewhat dangerous character has been removed, and we cannot but congratulate ourselves." Negotiations followed, by which the limits, not hitherto very clearly defined, between the French and English spheres of influence, were settled; and the whole valley of the Nile and its tributaries was formally reserved to England. There is no doubt that the firmness of Lord Salisbury's action in this matter, which in the case of one so peace-loving must have presented much difficulty, was of great importance, and did more than even the battle of Omdurman to establish the position of England in the political world. There were those who saw in it a key to what had appeared a somewhat weak inclination to yield to the demands of Germany and Russia, more especially in the further East. Lord Salisbury had felt it necessary to avoid any complications which might form an obstacle to the firm attitude he was resolved to assume with regard to the advances of France in Africa.

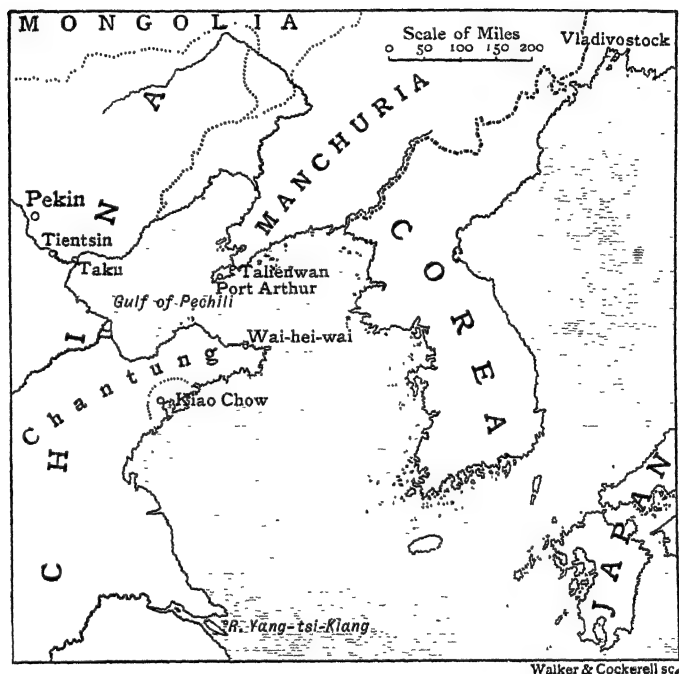
Affairs in the Corea had brought on a war between Japan and China in 1894. It was short and decisive. As in other matters, so in their army and navy the Japanese had adopted European methods; their troops, drilled by French and German officers, were constantly victorious; while one army, pushing round the north of the gulf of Pechili, advanced upon Peking, a second army captured the strong fortress of Port Arthur and occupied the peninsula of Liaotung.

War between
China and
Japan.

The unexpected collapse of China in its war with Japan revealed the weakness of that great Empire. Not unnaturally, every European country which had interests in the far East thought that the time had arrived for securing and enlarging them. Thus Russia, which was hard at work on its trans-Siberian railway, wished to secure a satisfactory commercial terminus to that great undertaking. As a naval Power, it had long aimed at securing a harbour for its fleet which should not be closed during many months of the year by ice as Vladivostok was; and, being in immediate contact with the Chinese empire, it naturally desired a preponderating influence at Peking. France, smitten with the colonial fever of the time, and full of mercantile jealousy, saw a hope of increasing the value of its establishments in Tonquin, and of thwarting the commercial supremacy of England by securing an

Interests of
European
countries.

access to the heart of China in that direction. Germany, whose trade interests were very large, was just at this time eagerly looking towards the formation of a strong fleet, and wanted a secure port and coaling station for its ships in the China seas. The interests of England were in some ways far greater than those of any of the other Powers; its trade amounted to 80 per cent. of the whole foreign exports of China; but these interests were not local, they were spread over the



whole empire. There was no desire on the part of England to acquire territory. Opportunity for the free expansion of trade, the maintenance and the enlargement of the treaties by which from time to time that opportunity had been won, were the points on which the English Ministers would naturally have to insist. As the burden of territory was not desired, their efforts were directed to maintain the integrity of the Chinese empire, and to seek commercial advantages through the

action of the Chinese themselves. The integrity of the empire thus became the first object of British policy. Freedom from any differential treatment which should hamper trade followed in its wake. To secure either one or the other must have taxed to the extreme the diplomatic capacity of any body of statesmen. Not only was it necessary to fight the battle against the whole body of counter-interests, it was necessary also to steer between the rival interests of the opponents themselves. The task was greater than could be accomplished; and Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour found themselves obliged, after a lengthened and many-sided struggle, to be contented with a state of things which, if it did not realise their objects in a completed form, seemed at least to secure England from any great disadvantage.

The most striking episode in this diplomatic war was the struggle with Russia. The efforts of the English Ministry to exclude Russia from the Liaotung peninsula were not well conceived, and wore an appearance of half-heartedness. Indeed it may be gathered from their utterances in England that they had no great objection to gratifying the Russian desire for an ice-free port. At all events, in their contest with Count Mouravieff, a diplomatist whose methods were not of a very scrupulous character, they were completely worsted. After occupying the harbour of Port Arthur in the winter of 1897, the Russians, under the excuse that, unable to reach their own icy port, they were enjoying the hospitality of China, speedily succeeded in obtaining a lease which practically placed in their hands not only Port Arthur itself, but Tali-en-wan, its commercial neighbour, and the whole large province of Manchuria.

**Russia secures
Port Arthur.**

But Russia had not been the first to lay hands upon Chinese territory. Already Germany had struck its blow. With a knowledge that Russia was certain to obtain a port, and that Kiaochow in the Chan Tung province was one of the ports coveted, Germany suddenly seized upon it. The opportunity of which advantage was taken was the murder of certain German missionaries in the province of Chan Tung. As the fullest apologies were offered and severe penalties exacted, the murder was plainly but an excuse. The temporary occupation was speedily changed into a lease, giving the Germans sovereign rights over the whole of the Chan Tung province. Thus in the face of continual diplomatic opposition, two steps had been taken which appeared to thwart irretrievably the English policy of territorial integrity.

**Germany
secures Kiaochow.**

The third step, which proclaimed to the world at once the diplomatic

defeat of the English Government and their determination to maintain their position in China at all hazards, was the occupation, in May 1898, by England itself of Wai-hei-wai, a port immediately facing Port Arthur, and which at the time was held to be highly defensible. Another breach in their original policy speedily followed. Not to be left behind in the acquisition of coast settlements, France had obtained a lease of Kwang Chow Lung in the south near Tonquin. The English Government thought it necessary, as a counterpoise to this increase of the French power, to obtain a considerable extension of the old settlement of Kau Lung, on the mainland just opposite Hong Kong, which was very desirable for the complete defence of that great mercantile centre.

It seemed at the time, in the middle of the year 1898, as though China in its decadence was to undergo the fate of the African continent, and fall a prey to the system of spheres of influence, sea-coast settlements, occupation of hinterlands, and all the other apparatus of European aggression. But here the policy of Lord Salisbury was more successful. Allowing the principle of "spheres of influence," or rather "of interest," and claiming for England the whole valley of the Yang-tsi-Chiang, he coupled it with a modified attempt to revindicate the integrity of the Chinese empire. While obtaining great and valuable concessions for English trade, he bound the Chinese Government not to part with any of the provinces in which the interest of England could be regarded as paramount. The other countries followed his example, and before the close of the year 1899, with the exception of Manchuria and Chan-Tung, the Chinese provinces were all safeguarded by treaties of non-alienation with one or other of the great European Powers. As long as the Chinese Government was maintained and would keep its treaties, it was unable, even though it desired it, to disintegrate itself. With this indirect and modified reconstitution of their territorial policy, the English Ministry had to be content. This part of their policy had in fact been always regarded as subordinate to what was after all the real interest of England, the opening of opportunities for commercial expansion. And even so, it had been more or less complicated with European politics. It had been necessary to conciliate the friendship of Germany, and to avoid a breach with Russia, if England was to stand clear and unhampered in the important discussions to which the action of France in Africa was at the time giving rise. There was some truth in the assertion of the Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, that the interests of the trade with China were more or less sacrificed to the necessities

England
secures Wai-
hei-wai.

Salisbury's
negotiations.

of European politics. The acquisition of Port Arthur by Russia not only drove the English Government to abandon their avowed policy and to acquire fresh territory, it also compelled them to meddle directly in commercial matters which had hitherto been left to individuals or companies. They were themselves obliged henceforward to undertake the business of extracting concessions from the Chinese, and openly to devote themselves to the support of mercantile interests. No treaty was henceforward made between China and any one of the Powers without a demand on the part of England for equality of treatment. And only in the case of Manchuria and Chan Tung did they fail in making good their claim. Everywhere the old treaty rights granted to all Europeans in common were carefully upheld. Separate action was as far as possible avoided; and where concessions were obtained the companies to which they were granted were of an international character in which more than one nation had an interest. The possibility of the exclusion of British interests was thus largely diminished. Even in Manchuria it was found possible to come to a friendly arrangement with Russia, by which at all events the two countries bound themselves not to throw obstacles in each other's way in their respective spheres of influence. The somewhat late appearance of the United States upon the scene set a seal upon the success of this "open door" policy, as it was called. Their Minister, Mr. Hay, succeeded in obtaining from Russia, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, a declaration that they would respect vested interests. The signatories declared their readiness to refrain from interference with the privileges of any treaty port, and from any attack, by the imposition of differential duties, upon the advantages already secured by their commercial rivals within any sphere of interest under their control or within any area held by them on lease.

It is plain that the whole success, such as it was, of this policy depended on the power of China to maintain itself.

Treaties and concessions formed the basis of a system which could last only so long as there remained a Power capable of treating and conceding. That China would long continue to be such a Power was by no means a matter of certainty. The rival claims and interests of European countries had scarcely been brought into workable shape, when events in the Chinese empire itself drove them to make common cause in assaulting it. The Japanese war had been a rude awakening of the rulers of China from their habitual complacency. Blow after blow had fallen upon the empire, which was now exhibiting all the pathetic symptoms of

The Boxer insurrection, 1899.

slow decay. The shifty diplomacy of weakness, the unwilling concession now to one Power now to another, the latent hope of playing off one against the other, the anger smothered beneath an enforced show of civility, characteristics which constantly mark the decadence of a venerable but worn-out civilisation, all were there. But amid these signs of decay there were statesmen who recognised the causes of weakness, and were not without hope that by reforms, and by the adoption of some at least of the weapons of their adversaries, the country might be recalled to renewed life. The Emperor, a man of feeble character, seems for awhile to have listened to their teaching, and to have issued edicts enforcing widespread changes. But it is not every people who, like the Japanese, can suddenly forget their past, and honestly accept the forms and requirements of a new state of society. Centuries of isolation, of contempt and hatred of foreign interference, were not to be wiped out by any imperial edicts. Apart from the administrative body, the bulk of the vast nation retained its deeply rooted belief in the excellence of its own institutions and hatred of the foreigner. The administrative body, itself deeply corrupt, was divided in opinion, and, although the union of races was generally believed to have been fairly well established, divided in race also. The reforming temper found its home chiefly among men of the old Chinese race, and its leaders in the viceroys of the great southern provinces. Conservatism was chiefly prevalent among the Manchu nobles of the north. Circumstances had allowed the Emperor and his reforming friends to secure the reins of government. But in 1898 the Empress-dowager, a woman of masculine character and ability, who had exercised paramount influence in the earlier years of the reign, carried out a *coup d'état*, and re-established herself and her party as the real directors of the imperial policy. The change of government did not at first appear to bring with it any immediate change in the relations of the empire with foreign Powers. But the anti-foreign feeling was allowed to assert itself more freely, and the secret societies, of which China has always been full, began to show active hostility. There were outbreaks in many places, and missionaries were ill-used and put to death. The most vigorous of the anti-foreign societies was known as the Sacred Harmony Fists, and the name of "Boxers" was applied generally to the rebels. They gradually extended their action through the northern provinces, killing native Christians as well as foreigners with many circumstances of cruelty.

Although some pretence at suppressing these movements was made, the European representatives were convinced that it was merely a

pretence; and early in 1900 letters were sent to their respective courts demanding immediate action. They suggested a naval demonstration. As both the Russians and Lord Salisbury saw considerable danger in this suggestion, the application was not immediately attended to. Left to themselves, the representatives continued to put what pressure they could upon the Chinese Government. They procured an edict against the Boxers, but it proved entirely ineffective; at the same time the Empress took a very threatening step in the opposite direction by appointing as successor to the throne the son of Prince Tuan, the leader of the conservative Manchu nobles. As the disturbances continued and spread, and the Boxers, apparently working in co-operation with the imperial troops, began to gather round Peking and threatened to cut it off from Tientsin from whence alone assistance could be obtained, on the 1st of June a small body of guards, consisting of marines of various nationalities, was brought up for the defence of the Legations. Tientsin itself was now threatened. The Powers began to recognise the critical character of the situation; troops were collected, and on the 10th of June, a most urgent telegram having been received at Tientsin, Admiral Seymour marched to the relief of the Legations with a mixed force of some 2000 men. But by this time the enemy opposed to him had so increased in strength that he found it impossible to fight his way through; his communications were broken, and he was obliged to withdraw. It was not till the 26th of June that the relieving force sent out from Tientsin to assist him in his retreat was able to bring back the admiral and his troops into safety.

Danger of the
Legations in
Pekin.

Meanwhile what was passing in Peking was absolutely unknown. The wildest rumours were afloat of terrible massacres, and the deepest anxiety was felt as to the fate of the besieged Legations. It ultimately appeared that the Europeans, collected chiefly in the British Legation and the surrounding buildings, had from the 20th of June been subject to constant artillery and rifle fire, and had there defended themselves with splendid bravery and endurance until the 16th of July. On that day the bombardment had been relaxed. But as there was no cessation of the irregular firing, and as the siege continued to be closely pressed, there seemed every probability of a speedy renewal of the assault. During all that time, although troops were being collected as quickly as possible, the defenders of Tientsin were not sufficiently numerous to do more than defend themselves. It was not until the beginning of August that a joint force of adequate strength was collected, and, after some

Siege of the
Legations in
Pekin.

sharp fighting, forced its way into Peking and placed the defenders of the Legations in safety. It was none too soon. The resources of the besieged were almost exhausted. The fighting men were few and had suffered heavy losses, and though supplies of food were found in the shops within the besieged area, and the large number of horses afforded the Europeans a plentiful if unappetising diet, the thousands of native Christians who had taken refuge in the enclosure around the Legations suffered greatly and the infant mortality was terrible. Much resourcefulness and much gallantry had been shown by every branch of the motley forces of the besieged. A few words from a private letter give a vivid picture of the severity of the struggle: "Of course the Legation is knocked about beyond recognition. In the building of fortifications every available brick has been pulled out and used; every available carpet, curtain, tablecloth, sheet, and pair of trousers have long since been made into sandbags, of which I think we must now have used about fifteen thousand. Bombproof shelters have been dug all over the place. Seventy missionaries are camped in the chapel. Families of all nations and races occupy our students' downstairs quarters. We have tried to guard against mining by digging a ten-foot trench all the way round. During the first days of the siege the wretches made the most determined attempts to burn us out, creeping up to houses that stood close to our walls and firing them with paraffin. They repeated this over and over again, and we had to work like very demons with our wretched little hand-pumps to check the flames, while the Chinese would keep up a hot fire on us all the time from the houses round." The Chinese Government had been strangely inconsistent, at one time pressing on the siege with all their power, at another time parleying with the besieged, even supplying them with a little food, and breaking off the regular bombardment. Their conduct is not easy to understand, but it appears to have been largely influenced by the course of the fighting around Tientsin, and on the whole there is little doubt of their complicity in the outbreak and in the siege.

The relief of the Legations having been successfully carried out by the combined troops under a German commander, Count von Waldersee, international difficulties at once arose. Having occupied Peking, it remained to be decided what the army was to do. Was punishment to be exacted for the probable but as yet unproved complicity of the Chinese Court? Or were the armies to withdraw, and the matter to fall into the hands of negotiators? The Russians at once proposed the latter step. In forming the joint army

**Peace negotia-
tions.**

the Powers had pledged themselves not to acquire territory. The maintenance of a Government in Peking capable of keeping order and of insisting upon the Treaties was an object of the first importance, especially to England. It was also the accepted policy of England to treat with any such sufficient native power without inquiring into its antecedents. Yet Lord Salisbury appeared unwilling to accept the Russian proposition. So also, and far more strongly, was Germany, which circumstances had placed for the time in a very commanding position. The murder of the German Minister during the uproar gave a good excuse for retaliatory measures. Moreover the allied forces had already been placed under the command of a German field-marshal. France, on the other hand, adopted the Russian view, while Italy ranged itself with Germany. In fact upon this question the lines of European friendships were found repeated; the members of the Triple and Dual Alliances appeared, as usual, to advocate opposite lines of policy. Such differences of opinion are no doubt inevitable when rival nations combine in the face of a great emergency to carry out a common line of action. In the present instance it was found possible so far to allay the rivalries that the agreement between the European Powers was not interrupted. Terms which could be offered to the Chinese were finally arrived at and accepted early in January 1901. The susceptibilities of Germany and of Japan were soothed by formal and complete apologies or the death of their diplomatic agents. The banishment of Prince Tuan and the execution of some of the ringleaders of the late disturbances served as a slight satisfaction to the prevailing desire for retaliation. The infliction of a large war indemnity, amounting on the whole to about £140,000,000, satisfied the somewhat greedy demands of several of the Allies; while the promise of commercial advantages, and the apparent maintenance of the integrity of the Chinese empire, might be regarded as a reward for the self-restraint exhibited by England for the purpose of maintaining friendly relations with the Allies.

In addition to the ever-increasing difficulties which attend colonial expansion, and the questions connected with international policy, the British Government has on its hands the management of the great Indian dependency. Lord Salisbury's Ministry was not free from anxiety in this direction.

India.

In a dominion so vast and widespread as that of the British empire the policy pursued in any particular country must inevitably be more or less subservient to the general foreign policy of the empire. Nowhere have the

The North-West frontier difficulties.

complications thus introduced been more obvious than on the north-west frontier of India. The intricacies of the Eastern question, and the relations of Great Britain with Russia and with the Mahomedan Powers have constantly to be considered. The disturbed condition of the independent tribes occupying the passes, the shifting attitude of the Afghan Ameer, and the constantly overshadowing dread of the approach of the Russians, has made that portion of India the scene not only of many of the most striking episodes in the history of the British Army, but also the great battle-field among Indian politicians. It is with respect to that portion of India that the policies of expansion or concentration, and the advantages of various scientific frontiers, have been most hotly discussed. But of late years, although at times differing in detail, a definite policy has been adopted, and has been handed on unbroken by Ministerial changes at home.

The independence of Afghanistan and the friendship of the Ameer have been the keynote of this policy. In Abdurahman the English had found a man of great ability. Unbiased by any strong predilection in favour of either of his great Christian neighbours, his view of his own interests led him to fall in with the policy of the Indian Government. It was by the friendship of the English and by their subsidies that he hoped to maintain his position against domestic rivals, and to keep back the advancing waves of Russian occupation. But this conviction did not prevent him from keeping a jealous eye upon the action of his friends, or from using from time to time those weapons of intrigue which come so readily to the Afghan. In pursuance of their general line of policy, the English had thought it necessary to insist upon a careful delimitation of the frontiers of Afghanistan. They had been loyally assisted by the Ameer in carrying out this work along the northern frontier; nor was much difficulty found upon the side of Persia and in Beluchistan. But the marking out of the north-west frontier was a much more complicated business. No Afghan ruler could forget that the Durani empire had once extended beyond the passes to the plain of the Punjab, or ignore the opportunities for unavowed opposition to the English advance which were offered by the wild tribes of Orakzais, Afridis, and Mohmands, who occupied the mountains, and who, while independent both of England and of Afghanistan, could always apply in their difficulties for the assistance of the Ameer. The Indian Government had however succeeded, in 1893, in inducing Abdurahman to receive Sir Mortimer Durand and to sign an agreement with him, marking out somewhat roughly a frontier between his own dominions and these

independent tribes. It was hoped that this delimitation would prevent the risk of complications with Afghanistan which had constantly attended the efforts to reduce the wild tribesmen to order.

Meanwhile, beyond the Afghan frontier the English had brought Cashmere under their protection, had pushed on as far as Gilgit, covering the passes in the Pamirs, and had The siege of
Chitral. even established some sort of authority over the valley of the upper Kunar occupied by the small state of Chitral. At the beginning of 1895 the English survey officers were employed under the escort of the Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army, in marking out the boundary between Chitral and Afghanistan, when they were informed that higher up the valley, the little English garrison in the fort of Chitral was besieged, and, quite cut off from external communications, was anxiously awaiting relief. Taking advantage of a disputed succession in Chitral, Umra Khan, an Afghan freebooter who had established himself in the neighbourhood, had moved suddenly upon the fort and had surrounded it. As Abdurahman was known to be aiming at the possession of this valley from which he had already once ejected Umra Khan, the strong step taken by that chieftain in the very presence of the Afghan army, and the skill and energy with which the siege was pressed, raised suspicions as to the Ameer's honesty which were never thoroughly removed. The siege afforded another opportunity for one of those exhibitions of personal bravery and unflinching tenacity of which the annals of the north-west frontier are full, and gave another proof, if proof was wanted, of the value of well-led native troops. Under Mr. Robertson, the English agent, the little garrison, composed of Sikhs and imperial levies from Cashmere, held out for forty-six days in the ill-constructed fort. The enemy, numerous and well armed, was fully supplied with fascines and other material for forming shelters. The towers of the fort were of wood, and liable to be easily set on fire. Trees and buildings closely surrounded the fort, and enabled the besiegers to approach close to the walls and even to fire through the loopholes. The garrison throughout the siege was on half rations. Several vigorous assaults were repulsed; more than once the enemy set fire to the towers, which were only saved with great difficulty; and finally, when a mine was run close to the walls and almost ready for explosion, it was destroyed by a gallant sally of the Sikhs headed by Lieutenant Harley. It was the last effort of the enemy. Three days later, on the 20th of April, it was known that the besiegers had retired. A force under Colonel Kelly had pushed its way over the snowy passes from Gilgit and approached from the

north ; while Sir Robert Low and General Gatacre, with troops hastily collected at Peshawur, had crossed the mountain ridges and entered the valley from the south. The relief of the garrison was thus secured.

Masters of the Chitral Valley, the English were now called upon to decide on the course to be adopted for the future. **Decision to occupy Chitral.** The Liberal Ministry were at the time in office. In their opinion the right course was to retire from the conquered valley ; for not only should the policy of England be one rather of concentration than of advance, but there were other reasons which rendered retirement desirable. Russia, with whom frontier settlements had been only lately completed, might not unreasonably take umbrage at the occupation of Chitral. Moreover, in order to induce the tribes to allow the passage of British troops to the relief of the fort, a proclamation had been issued, declaring that it was not the intention of England to acquire fresh territory ; and it was a grave question whether the national honour would allow of anything short of immediate withdrawal in the face of such a proclamation. But before effect could be given to this view, the change of Government occurred ; and Lord Salisbury's administration, regarding a retirement as likely to be injurious to British prestige, determined to continue the occupation of the valley. A road was ordered to be made so as to allow of the rapid advance of troops if necessary, and a considerable force was established at Malakand.

Not much more than a year elapsed before the whole frontier was in a wild state of excitement. The causes of this excitement were no doubt very various. The marking out of the boundary between the frontier tribes and Afghanistan, in pursuance of the arrangements of the Durand Treaty, had been nearly completed. But the object of the frontier delimitations was not unnaturally misunderstood ; it appeared to the wild and independent mountaineers to be a British and not an Afghan boundary which was being settled. That the object was to secure them from Afghan interference was not so clear to their minds as the intention at all events to separate them from Afghan assistance. Thus, already trembling for their independence, the apparent breach of faith in the establishment of the Chitral road could not but be regarded by them as an insidious step on the part of the British, and full of threatening import. But added to these causes, and perhaps in fact even more influential, was a formidable religious movement. It was not long since the Armenian massacres had occurred ; Europe had intervened, and yet the Sultan remained unharmed. The Christian

armies of Greece had been overwhelmed by the Turkish troops. The Ameer, calling himself the King of Islam, had assumed the position of one of the great heads of Mohammedanism; and everywhere the Mullahs were preaching enthusiastically a holy war. It seemed as if on all sides the power of Islam was rising.

Fortunately there was no great cohesion among the tribes. They broke out one after the other in isolated insurrections. In the Tochi Valley a treacherous attack was made upon Mr. Gee, a political agent, in which he and several officers were killed (June 1897), although the splendid bravery of a detachment of Sikh troops who formed his escort averted a complete disaster. A punitive expedition was sent into the country, but met with no great success. The next scene of disturbance was the Swat Valley lying between Chitral and Peshawur. The tribesmen, excited to enthusiasm by their religious leaders, assaulted the position of Malakand with extraordinary courage (July 26), and were only driven back with great difficulty and heavy loss of life. Again a punitive expedition was necessary. General Binden Blood, with 8000 troops, was sent into the valley. But the hostile tide was only partially checked. The Mohmands, who covered the high road to Peshawur to the north of the Kyber Pass, were the next to rise, and were followed almost immediately by the Afridis, who occupied the Pass itself, and who received allowances for keeping it open, and by the Orakzais, who covered it to the south. The Afridis began by assaulting the fort of Lundi Kotal, garrisoned by the Kyber Rifles, who, though themselves Afridis, offered a gallant but unavailing resistance to the attack. The inability of the English to advance at once and clear the pass encouraged the Orakzais, who in their turn assaulted some lately erected forts on the Samana ridge. The heroic bravery and fidelity of the Indian troops was illustrated by the self-sacrifice of a few soldiers of the 36th Sikh regiment who continued to hold a fort, to which the enemy had set fire, until the last man had perished in the flames.

So general a burst of fanatical hostility required immediate attention, and a body of 60,000 men under Sir William Lockhart was assembled to push its way into the Tirah district. It met with the most determined resistance. Pass after pass had to be forced with great difficulty and great loss of life. The Orakzais country was first overrun; and then the troops entered upon the Afridi Tirah. The defence assumed the character which has always attended the entrance of organised armies into wild mountainous

Various outbreaks among the frontier tribes.

The Tirah campaign.

districts. It is admirably described by Sir Hungerford Holdich, the surveying officer of the force. "Neither by night nor by day would the enemy trust themselves to open resistance or solid attack, but by day they could watch from their nests above the valley the scattered threads of transport moving in lines for foraging purposes, the little band of scouts covering the survey party that was making its way slowly up the hillside, working comfortably to within their range; or they could hang about the cliffs and woods whilst an advance in force was in progress, ready to mass themselves with most surprising rapidity on any luckless party that might get involved in the spider-web of nullahs. There was not an army. I doubt whether on any occasion their numbers could be counted into thousands. Certainly no British officer ever counted them. But this small brigade of bandits owed quite as much of their extraordinary mobility to the fewness of their numbers as to their loose organisation and mountaineering instincts. They simply played around the British force, and with the facilities that they possessed of attaining safe cover when too hard pressed, the hunting of them with an army of two divisions was not unlike hunting rabbits with a pack of foxhounds. And yet it is difficult to see how a smaller force could have played havoc with their country, and kept open a line of communications. It was much the same to us whether there were 50,000 or 5000. At all points was it necessary to be prepared for attack." Late events in South Africa have shown with what effect this form of warfare can be employed by a brave people. No doubt the power of Great Britain was exhibited and the hopelessness of prolonged resistance proved, as the British armies forced their way into every valley of importance. But there was little of the halo of victory around the troops as, still subjected to harassing attacks, they made their way down the passes on their return to India. While the army was in the Maidan Valley, the terms offered by Government had been declared. Fines were to be levied, arms to be surrendered, and all Government property to be restored. Great deputations both of the Orakzais and the Afridis listened to the declaration with some show of submission. As the Afridis proved subsequently to be still recalcitrant, many of their villages and towers were destroyed. But in spite of this the terms were still unaccepted when the troops, with a loss of more than 400 killed and 1300 wounded, returned to Peshawur. It was not till October in the following year, 1898, that opposition ceased; the arms were given up, the fines were paid, and the Kyber Pass was reopened.

It was not alone with war that the Government had to contend; in 1897, and again in 1900, famines of the most terrible character wasted vast regions of India, while in the former year a fearful outbreak of plague occurred in the Bombay Presidency, in which no less than 12,000 lives were lost. In both cases the Government undertook the responsibility of attempting to check the disaster and as far as possible to keep the people alive. The famine was unusually widespread. In the Central Provinces, in much of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, in nearly the whole of the North-West Provinces, and over large areas in the Punjab, and in the native States, it was found necessary to undertake relief measures. More than £500,000 was collected in England to assist in the charitable work, which, carried out according to fixed rules dictated by previous experience, met with some degree of success. In June 1897 there were upwards of 4,000,000 people employed on Government relief works; and even after the first rains had fallen in August, as many as 3,000,000 were still being fed. The rulers of many of the native States followed the English example, and worked well for the preservation of their people. The second famine was even worse than the first. It was combated with even greater energy, and with perhaps greater success. A careful report had been drawn up of all that had happened in 1897, and further elaborate rules had been formulated. But no energy or wise use of experience was sufficient to prevent the recurrence of the terrible disaster. The conditions of life were such that the slightest failure in the crops inevitably produced famine, and a close examination showed that these conditions were not improving. The number of people living upon the barest necessities of life, on the verge of starvation, was found to be increasing rather than diminishing. The risk of famine remains ever present.

Magnificent though the work of English administrators was both in the plague and in the famines, it did not meet with universal gratitude. The very measures taken to alleviate the terrible scourges brought into prominence the ever-recurrent danger of disaffection which besets the British rule in India, and emphasised the line which divides the civilisation of the rulers and the ruled. The stringency of the sanitary measures adopted to check the plague, not perhaps always carried out, in the midst of the crying necessity for haste, with due regard for the sensitive prejudices of the people, produced an outbreak in Poona, in which two English officials lost their lives. The general tone of the native press became violent and aggressive. The danger seemed so great that

Famines and
plague.

Signs of dis-
affection.

repressive legislation was thought necessary. Aided by the return of more prosperous seasons, this measure allayed at all events the outward expression of discontent.

In December 1898 Lord Elgin was succeeded in the Viceroyalty by Lord Curzon. The energetic administration of India does not depend much upon the political bias of its ruler.

Lord Curzon's
commercial
measures.

Two measures however were taken by Lord Curzon which could scarcely have been possible had a Liberal Ministry been in power. They were indeed of a somewhat speculative character, but are said to have proved successful in their working. One of these measures it was hoped might put an end to a constantly increasing evil. The instability of the price of silver, its unchecked depreciation, and the consequent fall in the rate of exchange between India and England, entailed heavy losses upon the Government itself and upon all who drew their wealth, whether as pensioners or as commercial men, from India. It was determined to introduce a gold currency, of which the English sovereign should be the standard, and to settle permanently the value of the rupee at 1s. 4d. The second measure, also connected with commerce, was the imposition of a countervailing duty on imported bounty-fed sugar. It was primarily in the interests of the Indian sugar industry, which was running the risk of being driven from the market by the importation of cheap European sugar. But in the second place it foreshadowed a policy to which effect was subsequently given by the Government in England, and which met with the hearty support of the Colonial Secretary, who was already mistrusting the doctrines of free trade, and eager to adopt any plan which he thought would afford relief to the disastrous depression of the West India Islands. As a matter of fact it is by no means certain whether any advantage has attended this policy, which in appearance was somewhat retrograde.

In the light of subsequent events, of all the questions which occupied the attention of the new Ministry by far the most important were those connected with South Africa. The complicated difficulties of the situation seemed to have reached a climax when the news was received in England that on December 30, 1895, Dr. Jameson, the Administrator of Mashonaland, had crossed the western frontier of the Transvaal with a body of troops to support the malcontents of Johannesburg.

The Jameson
Raid.

Origin of the
difficulty.

There was nothing new in the strained relations between England and the Boers. The retrocession of the Transvaal by Mr. Gladstone in 1881 was largely regarded in England

as an act of magnanimity; but certainly side by side with the highly conscientious motive moving the Ministry, there ran one almost as powerful of a more political character. The whole history of the British possession of South Africa led inevitably to difficulties apparently irremediable. The Dutch colony had been handed over without its consent to a foreign dominion; this mere fact planted a permanent root of discontent among the old inhabitants. The influx of British colonists had never been sufficient to place the new possessors in a numerical majority. The gift of self-government had given effect to this inequality of numbers, and, except in Natal, the majority of the voters were still men of Dutch extraction, the larger portion of the territory was still in Dutch hands. Under such circumstances it was inevitable that a widespread feeling of racial rivalry, not only in the purely Dutch States, but in the colony of Cape Town itself, should have arisen and continued. It was not in the nature of things that the Dutch Afrianders should feel strongly the ties of loyalty to a mother country which was to them not a mother country. Nor had the treatment they had received been such as to strengthen their attachment. The varying waves of colonial policy which had swept over England had created among them a deep feeling of the uncertainty and weakness of the imperial rule; the want of a firm and well-marked line of political action was not conducive to a contented reliance upon the imperial power.

The annexation of the Transvaal had been a bitter shock to Dutch feeling, not only in the Republic itself but also in Cape Colony; its restoration was almost a matter of necessity in face of the hostility it had excited. But whether magnanimous or political, it had won no gratitude; the restrictions contained in the Convention of Pretoria robbed it in the eyes of the Boers of most of its value. At best it was regarded as a step towards that complete independence which the Transvaalers had in view, and which, as they believed, had been granted them by the Sand River Convention of 1852. It was not only the natural discontent of a people under an alien supremacy which made the cleavage between the races. The difference of their political ideals was so great, that the high-flown language frequently used in connection with this subject, the assertion that the contest was between two different forms of civilisation, is scarcely exaggerated. The Dutch farmers, in their isolated lives brought into contact only with inferior races, and deeply imbued with the religious views of a past century, regarded themselves as a chosen people, and in using the word "Republic" used it as a man of the ancient

**Restoration of
Transvaal.**

or the medieval world might have used it. In their lips it was another word for an Oligarchy, and implied equality of rights among a strictly limited class. The strong democratic sentiment which had taken possession of England was wholly alien to them; the notion of equal rights, even among all the white inhabitants, much less among all men whether black or white, was quite beyond their sphere of thought. The stronghold of this feeling of superiority was the Transvaal, which owed its very existence to the action of men who refused to be subject, and who had given up their old position for the express purpose of maintaining their independence and traditional habits. It is not wonderful that there should have arisen among them a belief that the Transvaal, peopled so largely by the Dutch, treated with so wavering a policy by its present holders, and regarded apparently as valuable only in its relation to the more favoured land of India, would sooner or later become an independent State. Meanwhile their dislike of the Englishman, with his democratic ways, his business habits, his pursuit of wealth, and his claim to stand as protector of the native races, was very strong, and was mingled with some degree of contempt. It is only by understanding the circumstances and the hopes of the Dutch Afrianders, and by recognising their concentration in the Transvaal, that South African questions can be rightly interpreted.

The Convention of London in 1884, with the circumstances which led to it, was not calculated either to still the ambition of the Boers or to satisfy their hopes. While restrictions were still maintained which were inconsistent with complete independence, the people of the Transvaal, citizens henceforward of the South African Republic, had been allowed to assume a title which might easily convey to their minds a high idea of their importance. They received the Convention almost avowedly only as a fresh step forward towards independence and the occupation of a paramount position in South Africa. It required constant watchfulness and an attitude of considerable firmness to thwart their repeated efforts to break free from restraint. They were continually attempting to set aside the strict limits which had been set to the Transvaal State. In 1882 and 1883 they had only been prevented from securing new territory in the West by the appearance of Sir Charles Warren with a considerable force, and the absorption of the disputed territory into the British Colony of Bechuanaland. In 1884 their attempt to secure an outlet upon the sea, and the appropriation of Zululand, was only prevented by the annexation of that part of the coast-line by Lord Ripon. When in 1889 the Chartered Company was formed to occupy

Mashonaland, there was every chance that the Company would have been forestalled by a rush of Transvaal farmers; the movement was only checked by the presence of an armed force upon the frontier. But an entirely new complexion was given to their action when the discovery of gold at Johannesburg suddenly changed the Transvaal into the financial centre of South Africa, ^{The discovery of gold.} and seemed to give some prospect of the ultimate realisation of their dream of supremacy. Yet it was this very discovery which proved the cause of their ruin. The knowledge of the presence of gold in the neighbourhood of Johannesburg produced as a matter of course an immediate influx of miners and of speculators, largely of English nationality. The unfitness of the political views of the Boers to meet the exigencies of a modern progressive society at once became apparent. Instead of welcoming and absorbing the new-comers, they merely tolerated their presence for the purpose of using them as a means of adding to the wealth and power of the Burgher Oligarchy. Year by year they put fresh obstacles in the way of naturalisation, a longer time of residence being again and again required.

The "Outlanders," as the new-comers were called, were thus excluded from every vestige of share in political ^{Oppression of the Outlanders.} power, while in numbers they before long surpassed the older inhabitants of Johannesburg, and bore by far the larger share of the taxation. In addition to these grievances, they were called upon for military service, the one thing which above all others they regarded as implying of necessity the rights of citizenship. It was not to be expected that a large body of Englishmen would submit quietly to this treatment. Agitation for reforms soon began, and grew so strong that in 1894 Lord Loch, the High Commissioner, found it necessary to visit President Kruger at Pretoria. Matters were at the moment in such a critical condition, that at the earnest desire of the President he forbore to proceed to Johannesburg lest an outbreak should be the consequence. He contented himself with receiving a deputation from the outlanders, and with attempting to restrain them while fully acknowledging the reality of their grievances. They had naturally expected some immediate improvement in their position when they had thus formally laid their case before the Commissioner, and observed his sympathetic reception of it. But although Lord Loch had gravely warned Mr. Kruger of the risk he was running, his words produced no result except that the Boer Government seems at once to have begun to think of supplying itself with arms and the materials of war, and to contemplate with complacency a struggle with England.

Foiled in his desire to increase the limits of his State, the President proceeded to take steps to secure his financial independence. The Netherlands Railway Company, which had been materially helped by the wealth of Cape Colony and had entered into a contract for certain low terms of carriage as some sort of recompense, no sooner reached the conclusion of this contract than it raised its terms till they became almost prohibitive. Rather than pay them the Cape Town traders sent their goods by wagon across the Vaal river at certain fords or drifts, using the railway only through the Orange State. Mr. Kruger attempted to complete the exclusion of British trade by closing the drifts. He was determined that all the commerce of the Republic should pass through the northern railway and Delagoa Bay. So great was the anger aroused by this action, which took place in the latter part of 1895, that Mr. Chamberlain was compelled to address to the Boer Government what was practically an ultimatum. It was for the moment successful. But the incident gives clear proof of the continuous and determined hostility to the English which existed in the mind of Mr. Kruger. Unable to procure redress for themselves, aware of the strained relations existing with the Home Government, smarting bitterly under the slight forced upon them by their inferior position, the outlanders, or some of them at least, were thinking of something more than mere constitutional action. A revolution, if necessary a forcible revolution, was undoubtedly being planned.

The whole of South Africa was at this time under the influence of the remarkable personality of Mr. Cecil Rhodes. A man of vast wealth acquired by his great business capacities, and with broad imperialist views, he was now Acting-Director of the Chartered Company which ruled Mashonaland, the creation practically of his own genius. He was chairman of the greatest commercial enterprise in South Africa, the De Beer mines at Kimberley, and Premier of Cape Colony. He owed this position to the skill with which he had succeeded in securing the support not only of the English but of the Dutch Afrianders. The union of South Africa under one supreme government was his political object, and he desired that the supreme government should be British. In every respect he was the exact antithesis of the President of the South African Republic; while the one supported the interests of a small aristocratic oligarchy, the other was the avowed champion of democratic progress. It was the establishment of the Chartered Company in Mashonaland which had checked the expansion of the Transvaal; it

was the influence of Mr. Rhodes which seemed to be drawing even the Dutch inhabitants of Cape Colony to the loyal acceptance of the British flag. Not unnaturally he was regarded by Mr. Kruger as his most dangerous enemy. His brother, Colonel Frank Rhodes, who acted as his agent, was among the more prominent reformers in Johannesburg. It was impossible that the grievances of the outlanders there should escape the notice of Mr. Cecil Rhodes. He must have been well acquainted with the movement which it was hoped might remove the chief obstruction to the realisation of his political views. It may be said with some certainty that there was an understanding that when the right hour arrived, the reformers of Johannesburg would receive armed assistance from their fellow-countrymen in Mashonaland. With this view, though ostensibly for the purpose of taking over a portion of Bechuanaland (a step rendered necessary by the progress of the railway from the Cape to Bulawayo), a handful of troops, police and volunteers, had been assembled at Pitsani, close to the western frontier of the Transvaal, under the command of Dr. Jameson, Administrator of Mashonaland.

The reformers in Johannesburg were not skilful conspirators. A day had been fixed for the rising; and Dr. Jameson had been supplied with a letter (which he was to produce when occasion required it), alleging that the lives of the women and children in Johannesburg were in danger, and summoning him to their immediate assistance. But a difference of opinion arose among the leaders of the Outlanders as to what flag was to be raised if they were successful in their outbreak, and the day for the rising was indefinitely postponed while this question was being decided. Mr. Rhodes, wishing to wait until the opportunity was fully ripe, consented to the postponement, and sent a warning to Dr. Jameson, who however preferred to act upon his own judgment. Without a direct summons from the reformers, in fact in opposition to their known wishes, he persisted in crossing the frontier upon the day originally fixed (December 30, 1895). News of the Raid almost immediately reached England, where it was received at first with enthusiasm. For the *Times* had already published the false letter of appeal for help, with which Dr. Jameson had been supplied; and it was as the heroic rescuer of English women and children from the grasp of brutal enemies that the leader of the ill-judged invasion was for the moment regarded. The disappointment which attended the miserable fiasco was proportionately great. Dr. Jameson, although messengers from the High Commissioner ordering his instant return had reached

The Jameson
Raid.

him, and although he received no news of movement at Johannesburg, had insisted on pushing forward. He did not even pursue this headstrong course successfully. Having reached Krugersdorp, instead of marching direct to Johannesburg while the road was still open, he allowed his men to halt and sleep. They awoke to find the neighbouring hills occupied by the Boer commandos in positions too strong to be assailed with success. After a sharp skirmish Dr. Jameson and his party, unable to move forward and exposed on all sides to deadly rifle fire, were forced to surrender, upon a vague or perhaps misunderstood promise that their lives should be spared.

Taken by itself, the Raid was of little importance. A futile and badly managed conspiracy, an ill-judged and unsuccessful filibustering expedition, would scarcely be worthy of notice. But in the then existing relations between England and the Transvaal, its results could not fail to be far-reaching. Although Mr. Chamberlain took instant measures to check and repudiate Dr. Jameson's action, the suspicion that the Home Government had been cognisant of it took firm hold of the mind of Mr. Kruger and his advisers. From this time onwards their hostility to the paramount power and their determination to rid themselves of it at the first opportunity became fixed. On the other hand the Raid struck Mr. Chamberlain's weapon from his hand. It was impossible in the face of this act of violence to press at once for constitutional changes or to vindicate a course of constitutional opposition which seemed so certainly to lead to open rebellion. The behaviour of Mr. Kruger was at the time restrained and dignified. He gave up the captured raiders to be tried by the English; and when sentence of death was passed upon certain of the outlanders, he commuted it, chiefly for money payments. The leaders of the Raid were tried in England under the Foreign Enlistment Act, found guilty and sentenced to various not very long terms of imprisonment. But the real step imperatively called for by such circumstances was not taken.

The one thing necessary was an immediate and searching inquiry in order to clear the Government from all possible suspicion. But the Select Committee of Inquiry appointed by Parliament did not meet until the close of the session of 1896, nor make its report till July 1897, eighteen months after the Raid. Nor when the report appeared was it satisfactory; certain things which should have been examined were omitted, certain telegrams which should have been seen were kept back. There seemed to the ordinary looker-on to be an effort to throw a cloak

over something, it was not clear what, which the leaders of both parties in England desired to keep from publicity. Enough was produced to show that whatever may have been the case with respect to the Colonial Office in London, there was ample ground for the suspicious attitude of the Boer leaders. It was made certain that Mr. Rhodes had used his great power both commercial and political in support of the conspiracy, and that although the High Commissioner had been carefully kept in the dark, his secretary and the chief British official at Pitsani had been informed of what was going on. Even with respect to Mr. Chamberlain himself there was a sharp conflict of evidence, the recollections of one of the witnesses, Dr. Rutherford Harris, being entirely at variance with those of the officials of the Colonial Office. As the sanguine credulity of conspirators is well known, it is probable that Dr. Harris was wrong when he expressed what was undoubtedly his opinion at the time, that "the Colonial Office was in it." Still the actual revelations at the inquiry, coupled with the immunity of Mr. Rhodes from all punishment, the public declaration of Mr. Chamberlain that "there was no stain on the personal honour of Mr. Rhodes," and the very slight sentences which were inflicted on the raiders, were quite sufficient to establish an ineradicable mistrust in the minds of a race naturally inclined to suspicion and prejudice.

Moreover, while avoiding the one step which might have removed this bad impression, and while certainly treating the leaders of the conspiracy with extraordinary leniency, Mr. Chamberlain did not cease his efforts to remove the grievances of the outlanders, in a manner which could not but be most irritating to President Kruger. Before the meeting of Parliament in February 1896 he wrote an elaborate despatch, setting out afresh the claims of the British Government on behalf of the Johannesburgers, recapitulating all the outlanders' grievances, and recommending a plan for the separate municipal government of Johannesburg if it was found impossible to give the outlanders a satisfactory franchise. With the irritation inevitably caused by so gross an insult to his authority as the Raid, Mr. Kruger might well have resented such a despatch even had it been conveyed to him privately. His indignation can be well understood when he found that it had been published in England before it had been delivered to himself. It conveyed among other things a suggestion that Mr. Kruger should come to England to talk matters over. In his reply, after justifiably rebuking Mr. Chamberlain for his "new

Chamberlain's
despatch, Feb.
1896.

diplomacy," he declined the suggestion unless the points to be discussed included the famous 4th section of the Convention of London, 1884, in other words unless he was allowed to re-open the whole question of independence.

For awhile it appeared that a deadlock had been reached. And for the moment the attention of Government was directed to a side issue of the Raid, the outbreak in Matabeleland. The withdrawal of the troops and police for the purpose of the Raid had afforded an opportunity for a rising of the natives. The removal of military authority from the Chartered Company and its assumption by the imperial Government which had been thought necessary had created some temporary confusion. The Matabele tribes took advantage of the moment; massacres of the English settlers occurred in various parts of the country, and a general insurrection broke out. Sir Frederick Carrington and Colonel Plumer after much difficult fighting succeeded in getting the upper hand; but the natives were still unconquered in the recesses of the Matoppo Hills behind Bulawayo. Whatever may have been his mistakes, the courage and personal ascendancy of Mr. Rhodes were signally proved at this crisis. With two or three comrades only, and unarmed, he ventured into the fastnesses of the natives, summoned the chiefs to meet him, and by his personal influence induced them to put an end to the war and to accept reasonable terms (August 20, 1896).

Meanwhile, if the position of Mr. Chamberlain had been weakened by the Raid, that of Mr. Kruger had been proportionably strengthened. But instead of seizing the opportunity to carry out such comparatively slight measures of reform as might have satisfied the hopes of the depressed community at Johannesburg, he preferred to follow a policy of aggression. His determination to vindicate the position of the Transvaal as an independent international State became hardened. After his re-election to the Presidency in the spring of 1896, he entirely disregarded the vague promises to "forget and forgive," which he had made (January 10) when the memory of the Raid was still fresh. In flagrant contravention of the 1884 treaty, laws were passed changing the position of aliens considerably for the worse, while several treaties were contracted with foreign Powers without the sanction of the English Crown. The mining and commercial population were harassed by still larger taxation, a profound corruption reigned unchecked in every branch of the administration. All this was the more aggravating because Mr. Kruger had himself caused the

The Matabele rising, March 1896.

Kruger's position.

Volksraad to appoint an Industrial Committee to inquire into and remedy the grievances of the miners, and when its report proved unfavourable to his wishes, had succeeded in rendering it entirely nugatory. And all this time he continued steadily to pursue the one great object he had set before him. He sent missions to Europe in order to win the interest of foreign Powers. He made a treaty with the Orange Free State, with which England had no sort of quarrel, pledging that State to throw in its lot with the Transvaal. Intrigues with the Dutch in Cape Colony welded the interest of the Dutch race into one. Vast sums spent on munitions of war prepared the way for the ousting of British influence and for the establishment of a Dutch South African Republic.

For nearly two years the English Government contented itself with diplomatic protests against the infringement of the Chamberlain's Convention. But towards the end of 1897 Mr. Chamberlain's protest. Chamberlain seems to have thought that the partial paralysis caused by the Raid had lasted long enough. The President of the Transvaal had demanded foreign arbitration with respect to the Convention, thereby implicitly assuming the international status of his country. To this, on the 16th of October, Mr. Chamberlain replied in a long despatch, in which he raised to its full value the British claim of suzerainty, declared that it was still an integral part of the London Convention, and that not even in the matter of arbitration could Great Britain allow of foreign interference.

Already, in the preceding May, an important change had been made by the appointment of Sir Alfred Milner to the post of High Commissioner in the place of Lord Rosmead **Appointment of Sir Alfred Milner.** (Sir Hercules Robinson). The outgoing Commissioner had been in office during the Raid, he had been tricked and deceived by the conspirators, had sympathised with the irritation of President Kruger, and had practically refused to carry out certain high-handed suggestions of the Colonial Office which he regarded as vitiated by the conduct of the raiders. If there had been a lull in active diplomacy, it was probably due to his persuasions. He withdrew on the plea of ill-health, and Sir Alfred Milner, a much younger man, of high academic reputation which had been justified by his successful work in Egypt, and who was now holding the important post of Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, was selected to succeed him. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the renewed activity of the Colonial Office was largely due to the very definite views which the examination of the affairs of South Africa raised in the mind of the

new-comer. They were not formed hurriedly. Sir Alfred Milner pursued his study of the problem before him with careful industry, even learning the Dutch language for the purpose of acquiring his knowledge first hand. In March 1898, when he had arrived at a sufficiently distinct conclusion, he publicly urged upon the Dutch in Cape Colony the duty of using their influence to obtain reforms in the Transvaal, and to remove the wholly ungrounded suspicion that England had hostile designs upon that country. He pleaded in vain.

The Government of the Transvaal continued its course, the **The grievances** grievances of the people of Johannesburg grew heavier **continue.** and heavier. Unquestionably the agitation, which naturally resulted from oppression, like other political agitations was aggravated by exaggeration. Unquestionably it was kept up and increased by the support of rich men from outside. But the grievances were very real, and the outlanders were not, as was frequently asserted, a mere body of reckless speculators, but in large proportion were men who intended to be resident citizens of the State, and who proved by their subsequent conduct during the war that they were possessed of sterling qualities. The death of a man of the name of Edgar, who was pistolled apparently unnecessarily in the presence of his wife by a Transvaal policeman as he was arresting him, afforded the opportunity for a decisive step. The grievances were now formulated in a great petition addressed to the Queen, signed by nearly 22,000 of the inhabitants, begging for the intervention of the British Government. The petition, which received the support of large numbers of British subjects in other parts of the colony, reached the Colonial Office on April 14, 1899. It set forth at length the oppression to which the inhabitants of the Rand had been subject since 1895, the deprivation of all political rights, the heavy taxation, the misapplication of the revenue, the maladministration and speculation, the impossible conditions to which the education of the outlander children was subjected, the inadequacy and recklessness of the police. To this was added the restraint put upon the "inherent and inalienable birthright of every British subject, his right to petition his sovereign." On these grounds the petitioners besought her Majesty's protection, and begged that inquiry might be made and measures taken "to insure the speedy reform of the abuses complained of," and to obtain substantial guarantees from the Transvaal Government for the recognition of their rights as British subjects.

Mr. Chamberlain issued his reply on the 10th of May. He had meanwhile received by telegraph a long, important and decisive despatch

from the High Commissioner. In it Sir Alfred Milner declared that the case for intervention was overwhelming. The policy of leaving things alone had been tried for years and had only led to their going from bad to worse. This, he said, was not owing to the Raid. "They were going from bad to worse before the Raid. We were on the verge of war before the Raid, and the Transvaal was on the verge of revolution. The effect of the Raid had been to give the policy of leaving things alone a new lease of life and with the old consequences." The advice of the High Commissioner, confirming as it did his former convictions, removed all doubt from the mind of the Colonial Minister. He determined to intervene and to intervene firmly. It is plain after the event that war was the necessary consequence. But the Government still hoped that strong pressure might induce Mr. Kruger to yield. After expressing a desire "to maintain cordial relations with the South African Republic," they urged that a meeting should be arranged "for the purpose of discussing the situation in a conciliatory spirit, in the hope of arriving at such an arrangement as her Majesty's Government could accept and recommend to the Outlander population as a reasonable concession to their just demands."

On the 31st of May a Conference was opened at Bloemfontein between President Kruger and Sir Alfred Milner. It is unnecessary to follow the negotiations closely. The concluding passages of Sir Alfred Milner's despatch clearly show the real point at issue both at this time and when war supervened, and the only step which he thought might possibly avert it. "The spectacle of thousands of British subjects kept permanently in the position of helots, constantly chafing under undoubted grievances, and calling vainly to her Majesty's Government for redress, does steadily undermine the influence and reputation of Great Britain and the respect for the British Government within the Queen's dominions. A certain section of the press, not in the Transvaal only, preaches openly and constantly the doctrine of a Republic embracing all South Africa, and supports it by menacing references to the armaments of the Transvaal, its alliance with the Orange Free State, and the active sympathy which in the case of war it would receive from a section of her Majesty's subjects. I regret to say that this doctrine, supported as it is by a ceaseless stream of malignant lies about the intentions of the British Government, is producing a great effect upon a large number of our Dutch fellow-colonists. Language is frequently used which seems to imply that the Dutch have some superior right even in this colony to th-

Chamberlain's
reply.

Lord Milner's
despatch.

fellow-citizens of British birth. Thousands of men peaceably disposed, and, if let alone, perfectly satisfied with their position as British subjects, are being drawn into disaffection, and there is a corresponding exasperation on the side of the British. I can see nothing which will put a stop to this mischievous propaganda but some striking proof of the intention of her Majesty's Government not to be ousted from its position in South Africa. And the best proof alike of its power and its justice would be to obtain for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal a fair share in the government of the country which owes everything to their exertions. It could be made perfectly clear that our action was not directed against the existence of the Republic. We should be only demanding the re-establishment of rights which now exist in the Orange Free State, and which existed in the Transvaal itself at the time of, and long after, the withdrawal of British sovereignty. It would be no selfish demand, as other Uitlanders besides those of British birth would benefit by it. It is asking for nothing from others which we do not give ourselves. And it would certainly go to the root of the political unrest in South Africa, and though temporarily it might aggravate, it would ultimately extinguish, the race feud which is the great bane of the country."

The point at issue was in fact the maintenance of British supremacy in South Africa; the only possible cure was such an alteration in the franchise as would render immediately possible a complete change in the policy hitherto pursued by the Transvaal. The franchise thus became the one great point of discussion at the Conference. Anxious to gain a little time, the President suggested various schemes, all of which were and could be easily shown to be futile for the desired purpose, but which were cleverly conceived to raise the idea that the British Government was in an overbearing manner pressing for insignificant points and had already determined upon violent measures. Many people found it difficult at the time to avoid this conclusion. The diplomacy of Mr. Chamberlain did not appear conciliatory, the suspicion with which every proposition of the Boers was received, the uncertainty of the legal aspect of the case, led many to believe that greater tact and a more sympathetic treatment of the question might have avoided war. Such a view was an error. With two nations of entirely different aspirations facing each other, led by two men of masterful and obstinate character, and both of them underrating the military strength of their opponents, war was from the first inevitable, though when it came it came somewhat as a surprise and from the quarter whence it was least expected. The ~~fact~~ of Mr. Kruger's offers with respect to the franchise raised the real

question at issue. He offered a five years' franchise, which was what England had been demanding, but appended conditions virtually annihilating the suzerainty of England and declaring the complete independence of the Transvaal. The conditions were of course declined, and the offer was withdrawn. Attempts to get the offer renewed without the conditions proved useless, and the Government declared themselves "obliged to consider the situation afresh," and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement.

Meanwhile it had become quite obvious that if there was a war it would be a war of races. Mr. Steyn, President of the Orange Free State, had intervened. He complained Intervention of
Mr. Steyn. that imperial troops were massing upon the borders of his State. He refused to listen to the reply that this was merely a counter-step against the armed measures of the Boers, and finally induced his Volksraad to pass a declaration that there was no cause for war, that if it was begun by her Majesty's Government it would be calamitous and criminal, and that the Free State would throw in its lot with the South African Republic. Things had come to such a pass that in September troops had been ordered out both from India and from England. Small though the reinforcements were, they were yet sufficient to make the Boers a little uncertain as to that complete superiority of their arms on which they had relied; and on the 9th of October Mr. Reiz, the State Secretary of the Boer ultimatum,
Oct. 9. Transvaal, handed in a lengthy and angry ultimatum, demanding that all the troops on the borders of the Republic should be instantly withdrawn, that all the reinforcements which had arrived since June should be removed, and that the troops now on the high seas should not be allowed to land. A reply was to be given not later than 5 p.m. on the 11th of October. If the reply was not favourable "the Transvaal Government would be compelled to regard the action of her Majesty's Government as a formal declaration of war." It is needless to say that such an ultimatum was at once refused; and Mr. Steyn having notified that he intended to carry out the late resolution of the Volksraad, the inevitable war began. The Boer commandos at once crossed the frontier in three directions, entering Natal on the 12th of October by Laing's Nek from the Transvaal, while from the Orange State they advanced westward, besieging Kimberley and Mafeking, and southward towards Stormberg.

Though the evidence given before the Commission of Inquiry, appointed after the end of the war, has brought to light the shortcomings of the War Office, the Report Negligence of
the Cabinet.

has rightly laid the blame of the disastrous opening of the war upon the Cabinet as a whole. They had been fully warned. The Intelligence Department, the officers in command on the spot, and the military experts at home had all joined in bringing to the knowledge of the Ministry the threatening state of military preparation in the Transvaal, the aggressive temper of the Boers, the certainty that the Orange State would make common cause with their Dutch compatriots, and the desperate character which a war in South Africa was likely to assume; yet the sudden ultimatum and the immediate action taken upon it came with all the effect of a surprise. The troops, whether in Natal or in Cape Colony, were wholly insufficient for the purposes of aggressive defence, though they barely succeeded in warding off the disaster of a triumphant and successful invasion. The preparations both at home and in the Colony for sustaining a lengthened and important war were totally inadequate. Such easily understood requirements as abundant ammunition, a proper reserve of equipments, and a supply of trustworthy maps, were all wanting. No means had been taken to counteract or rival the well-known mobility of the Boer commandos. The artillery proved deficient in quality. But in all this there was nothing new, nothing which has not characterised the opening of every considerable war in which Great Britain has taken part. The country, leaning upon its wealth and industrial development, always regards a great or offensive war as a thing too improbable, and too far off, to demand attention. It is satisfied with the care of what it regards as a sufficient guarantee for safety, its naval preponderance, the excellence and high organisation of the fleet, which it speaks of as the first line, but which it really believes to be the only necessary line, of defence. If Great Britain is to be ready to carry on military operations on a large scale either in Europe or elsewhere, there is no doubt that the military system and the War Office which is charged with its administration must be thoroughly revised.

But in the present instance the charge of unreadiness was not a military but a political charge, and arose from an entire misconception by the Cabinet of the importance of the war, and from a persistent conviction of some of its chief members that there would be no war at all. Everything points to the belief that the negotiators were throughout convinced that the Boers would so far yield to pressure as to accept a position which might satisfy the demands of empire. The openness and roughness of the diplomacy rested upon this conviction. It was the game of the bully. When it proved a losing game, and when the Cabinet was forced to

Conviction that
there would be
no war.

recognise the truth of the many indications of inflexible determination shown by the Boers, it came upon them as a surprise and with the necessary consequences of a surprise. It must not however be forgotten that throughout the negotiations the Ministers were in a position implying an awkward dilemma. Any signs of warlike preparations or increase of troops would inevitably risk their negotiations, any absence of such preparations would inevitably give the Boers the initiative if the negotiations failed. They chose one horn of the dilemma, with the necessary consequence that the initiative passed out of their hands.

The chief danger was at first in Natal. It was thought desirable to defend the extreme north of the Colony in the direction of Laing's Nek. From a military point of view the determination was unwise; for the north of Natal consisted of a triangular tongue of mountainous and difficult country running up between the Transvaal and the Orange State, and thus open to assault from both sides. Political reasons, the fear of the disheartening effect on the Colony of the occupation by the Boers of any part of its territory, and the great risk that the Zulus would throw in their lot with the advancing enemy, were urgently pressed upon Sir George White, then in command of the forces in Natal. He yielded, and allowed General Penn Symons to hold Glencoe, while he himself concentrated the bulk of the army in the town of Ladysmith. On the 15th of October the Boers, having occupied Newcastle, made an effort to surround and cut off the troops in Glencoe. They were checked by a brilliant engagement at Talana Hill (October 20), but the victory was attended not only by the loss of General Penn Symons, but by the capture of a considerable body of cavalry and mounted infantry who, pressing too far forward, found themselves surrounded and taken off to Pretoria. Nor was the victory sufficient to check the Boer advance. A second victorious encounter fought under General French at Elandslaagte (October 21) was equally ineffective. General Yule, who had succeeded Penn Symons, found it necessary to leave his sick and wounded behind at Dundee, where they were well cared for by the Boers, and to withdraw his forces by a somewhat circuitous route to join the headquarters at Ladysmith. The movement was covered by Sir George White, who met the enemy on the 24th of October at Rietfontein. Though this engagement was successful in its object of allowing the troops under Yule to reach Ladysmith, it did not check the Boer advance. In great strength, probably twice as numerous as the British troops, they surrounded the town, enclosing within it Sir George White and his army of about 12,000

position in which the British forces had been placed, a position which could have been allowed by the military only on an absolute misconception as to the strength of their opponents. It was with astonishment that the British artillery found itself entirely outraged by the artillery of the Boers; and the situation at Ladysmith was only saved by the timely arrival of a contingent from the fleet (November 2), bringing with it more effective ordnance. When Sir Redvers Buller, a man in whom the strongest reliance was felt, was placed in command, and it was known that an army corps was already on its way to reinforce the troops, it was believed in England, in despite of the want of success in withstanding the Boer advance, that the danger was but temporary and that the year might well see the conclusion of the war. The vanity of this hope was soon discovered. The first duty of the troops as they arrived was to relieve the two beleaguered garrisons at the opposite ends of the frontier line, and at the same time to check the Boer commandos which had crossed the Orange river and were finding assistance from their Dutch brethren within Cape Colony. The condition of things in Natal was so threatening that General Buller thought his presence there necessary. The advance towards Kimberley was intrusted to Lord Methuen. General Gatacre was given the exceedingly difficult task of clearing with quite inadequate troops the northern frontier of Cape Colony and the districts around Stormberg.

In all three directions misfortune met the British arms. Lord Methuen, having won a distinct victory at Belmont (November 22), and having forced the line of the Modder river with considerable loss, found himself confronted by the army of Commandant Cronje occupying the strong position of Magersfontein. He attempted his assault on the night of the 10th of December, hoping to fall upon the Boers by surprise. Such night marches, though much favoured by the generals in this war, are peculiarly liable to mishap. A warning, perhaps given by Boer spies, perhaps by the accidental discharge of a rifle, allowed the enemy to penetrate the design. In the darkness the Highland Brigade had been brought too close to the trenches before assuming open order; the men were but half deployed when a murderous and overwhelming fire was opened on them. They were reduced to seek shelter, but remained at close quarters with the enemy until at one o'clock in the following afternoon one of the regiments could bear it no longer and retired some 500 yards. The battle had spread in other directions, but the assault had failed. Lord Methuen in his despatch writes, "The

General Buller's arrival.

Magersfontein,
Dec. 10, 11.

retirement was unfortunate, for the enemy were at this time quitting the trenches by tens and twenties. The men in the Highland Brigade were ready enough to rally, but the paucity of officers rendered this no easy matter. I attach no blame to this splendid Brigade." However this may have been, Lord Methuen's great attempt had proved a failure, and had cost more than 800 men.

On the very same day General Gatacre, constantly urged by the Commander-in-Chief at Cape Town to make an advance, and hoping to compensate for the deficiency of his forces by somewhat rash tactics, was attempting to dislodge his opponents at Stormberg by a movement of a similar character. In the night of the 9th of December he led a force of about 3000 men from Molteno, with the intention of turning the right flank of the enemy. His guides deceived him. He persisted none the less in pushing on, and found himself suddenly face to face with a foe already expecting him, and in a strong position. His men were much wearied with the long night march, and after a gallant attempt to drive the enemy from the hills, were forced to withdraw. The retreat was disastrous. Broken by fatigue, and constantly under the fire of the Boers from the neighbouring hills, it was with the loss of more than 600 men taken prisoners, besides 80 killed and wounded, that the column regained Molteno.

Five days later began the series of operations which ultimately resulted in the relief of Ladysmith. But that object was not attained till after many failures, the effect of which was very painful to the vanity of the English people. The evidence taken by the Commission of Inquiry throws much light upon the reasons for these failures. Sir Redvers Buller had not full confidence in his troops. He found himself face to face with a most difficult military problem and supplied with forces insufficient in number and entirely unused to war. From his own evidence it would seem as though his first operations were intended rather to train his troops than to attain the immediate object, the relief of Ladysmith. Unwilling to expose his untried men to the difficulties of bush fighting, he avoided an attack upon the left or eastern part of the Boer position, which proved subsequently to be the easiest road towards the beleaguered town. Believing that he could cross the Tugela and find beyond it an advanced position offering some safety and some room for the movements of his troops, he determined to attack Colenso. He says himself that he never went so far as to give orders for an attack, but had only pointed out the positions he wished his troops to occupy. The

Gatacre's
defeat at
Stormberg.

Colenso,
Dec. 15.

Brigade upon the left under General Hart advancing beyond the indicated position came under fire and was involved in battle. While withdrawing them, Buller received information that upon the right his artillery had also been pushed into an untenable position; men and horses were shot down at long range and perhaps also from the thickets in the immediate neighbourhood. All efforts to rescue the guns proved unavailing and no less than eleven had to be abandoned. The check was so severe that Buller considered it inexpedient to renew the attack.

Within a week the British arms had thus sustained three sharp reverses. No wonder that complaints were heard in England of the incapacity of the Generals; but neither the people nor the Government were dismayed. As is not unusual in the case of English wars, want of immediate success called out the latent combativeness of the nation. The number of those who spoke against the war grew less, the determination to bring it to a successful end grew sterner. The Government, fully aware at last of the ridiculous misconceptions under which it had entered upon the war, with reckless lavishness now poured troops into the Colony. Seven Divisions had already been mobilised and despatched. An eighth Division was now constructed. Volunteers were called for from the Yeomanry and the volunteer regiments. The colonies, who from the first had exhibited their loyalty to the empire by offering and despatching the small contingent of troops which were at that time considered sufficient, were earnestly requested to send more mounted men. But, more important still, it was recognised that the war in Natal gave work enough to Sir Redvers Buller, and Lord Roberts' arrival. Lord Roberts, with Lord Kitchener as his Chief of the Staff, was appointed to the chief command, and intrusted with the advance through the Orange State.

Almost immediately after the arrival of Lord Roberts, Sir Redvers Buller made his second attempt. Again the evidence before the Commission throws much light upon what happened. But the light is broken and perplexing, because the two generals on whom the ultimate responsibility must rest give very different versions of the events themselves and interpret them in a very different spirit. Buller's plan seems to have been to make a wide turning movement towards his west or left flank and to reach what he believed to be comparatively level ground at Acton Homes behind the Boer defences of the Tugela. Meanwhile a direct attack of the nature of a feint was to be made upon the passage of the river known as

Renewed
efforts.

Lord Roberts'
arrival.

Spion Kop.
Jan. 23.

Potgieter's Drift. The whole of this movement was placed in the hands of Sir Charles Warren. Understanding that he was intrusted with an independent command, he used his discretion in the interpretation of the general orders given him. Believing that the country round Acton Homes was unfavourable for the intended operations, he restricted the turning movement within much narrower limits than those which Buller had suggested. The plan as thus conceived required the occupation of a ridge extending westward from Spion Kop, and of that mountain itself, the capture of which had not been originally contemplated. General Buller was however himself present and accepted though unwillingly the change of plan. The attack was postponed for a day in order to allow the ground to be reconnoitred, but on the night of the 23rd of January the troops under the immediate command of General Woodgate occupied Spion Kop with little loss. The surface of the hill did not lend itself well to entrenchments, nor were such as were erected very satisfactorily placed. The troops upon the summit found themselves exposed to a terrible fire from the adjoining hills and the loss was very great. The pressure was so strong that Buller thought it necessary, on the death of General Woodgate, so far to interfere with the arrangements of his lieutenant as to order him to put Colonel Thorneycroft in command with the rank of Brigadier-General, over the heads of the officers to whom the command would naturally have fallen. He selected Thorneycroft as being a trustworthy fighting man. Though exposed to a fearful fire and tortured by thirst, the troops courageously held their position during the whole day, in the midst of a carnage rendered all the more terrible by the narrow limits within which it was concentrated. Sir Charles Warren, acting as he tells us under the direction of General Buller which he recognises as wise, did not himself visit the hill, and communication appears to have been very difficult and much interrupted. He had no idea of relinquishing the position. Reinforcements and engineers with the necessary material for entrenchments were actually advancing up the mountain when they were met by the defenders in full retreat. The slaughter had been so great, the chance of bringing guns to the summit or of successfully handling them when there appeared so slight, that Thorneycroft had thought it wise to order a retirement. It seems uncertain whether the position might not have been safely reoccupied on the following morning. Lord Roberts considered that it would have been possible to re-establish the position during the night and blames Thorneycroft for withdrawing. After the withdrawal Sir Redvers Buller himself took over the

command, and a safe and orderly retreat across the Tugela was accomplished. It is perhaps useless to apportion the blame of this dearly bought disaster. As sometimes happens bravery lost its reward because "some one had blundered." In the judgment of Lord Roberts, want of energy in Warren, want of decision in Buller, and want of tenacity in Thorneycroft, combined to produce the unfortunate result.

Whatever may have been the mistakes Buller committed, he did not fail in dogged persistency. Ten days afterwards he attempted for the third time to break through ^{Vaalkranz, Feb. 5.} the Boer lines. On this occasion he selected an opening a little further to the east, and succeeded in driving the enemy from a ridge of hills known as Vaalkranz. Nor were the Boers able to dislodge him. But closer examination led to the opinion that further advance would have brought the troops under a fire too heavy to have been resisted; and once more General Buller withdrew behind the Tugela.

Meanwhile, on the other scene of the war, Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener had been busily engaged in organising what ^{The relief of Kimberley.} was intended to be the great work of the campaign, the direct invasion of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. But Kimberley had first to be relieved. The army under Lord Roberts had been concentrated to the south of the Modder river, and while General Methuen continued to face Cronje's army, a force of 5000 horsemen and two divisions of infantry were collected some thirty miles to the south. The enemy, already misled by a temporary advance of a brigade under Sir Hector Macdonald towards the west, were still further deceived by this movement of troops towards the south-east. The forces thus collected were placed under General French. Sweeping round the beleaguering army, he crossed the Riet and the Modder rivers before any serious effort could be made to intercept him. Leaving the infantry to hold the ground he had covered, the cavalry pressed on with extreme rapidity and reached Kimberley on February 15. The Boer forces at once withdrew, and the long siege was at an end. For four months the garrison and townspeople had held out under the skilful management of Colonel Kekewich. Mr. Rhodes, who had gone to Kimberley at the outbreak of the war, charged himself with the defence of the mines, and by a judicious use of his wealth and by finding employment for the poorer inhabitants did much to alleviate their sufferings. Though the siege, as a military operation, presented no striking features, it played a considerable part of the general plan of the campaign. The presence of Mr. Rhodes in the town gave it a fictitious

value in the eyes of the Boers; and the forces under the command of Cronje, which might otherwise have been a source of great danger, remained practically useless around it while Lord Roberts was completing his plans.

The relief of Kimberley was however but a side issue of the greater operations of the campaign. With General Cronje's surrender, Feb. 27. French's troops between him and Kimberley, and aware of the intentions of Lord Roberts, Cronje at once retired with great rapidity up the Modder river towards Bloemfontein. An exciting race between him and his pursuers brought him to Paardeberg, where he found that he had been outstripped and that the British troops lay all around him. He took up a position in the bed of the river (February 17). And there, with their women and children huddled in wagons or sheltered in burrows scooped in the sand, he and his followers held out under a fearful artillery fire for more than a week. Gradually the ring of his assailants closed round him, and at length the occupation by some of the Canadians of a position commanding the river bed (February 26) and the hideous condition of his camp from the destruction wrought by the artillery upon his horses and cattle, drove him to surrender. He capitulated unconditionally, and with his whole army of 4000 men was at once despatched to St. Helena.

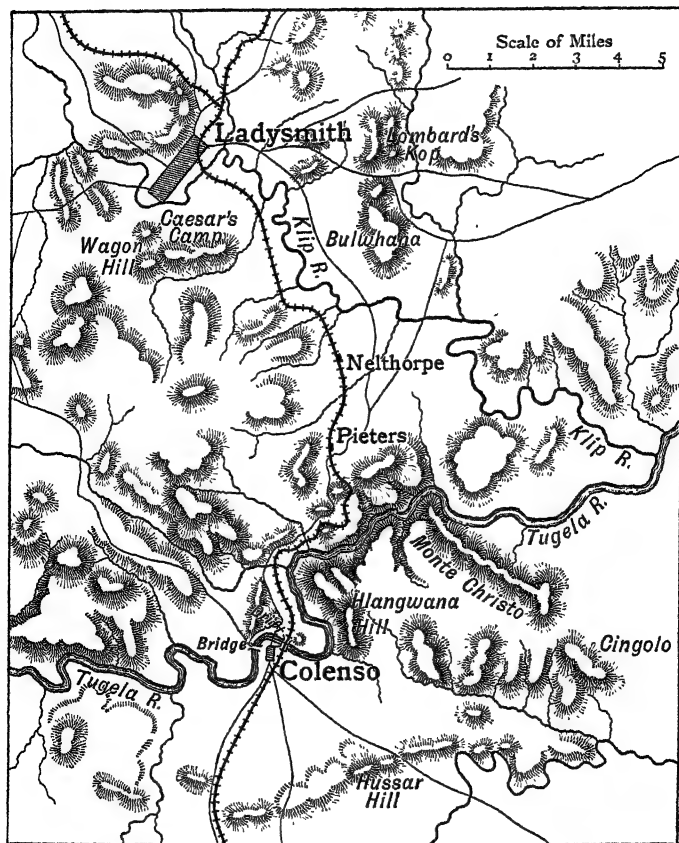
This great surrender was followed by the occupation of Bloemfontein. The resistance offered to the advance of the troops from Paardeberg was overcome without much difficulty. But the hardships of the whole march had been severe. While in the act of carrying out his great operation, Lord Roberts had been nearly crippled by the unfortunate loss of a large convoy of provisions (February 15). In full reliance on his troops however he had proceeded with his work, and though reduced to half and even to quarter rations, his men had not failed him. But once arrived at Bloemfontein, a period of rest and recruitment was a matter of absolute necessity; the horses were worn out, supplies had to be brought up from the Cape. For six weeks the army lay in apparent idleness, an unfortunate necessity, as it prevented Lord Roberts from taking immediate advantage of the disorganisation of the enemy, and allowed the Boers time to recover their shaken courage.

The rapid advance towards Bloemfontein and the critical situation of the Boer leader at Paardeberg had somewhat lessened the grip of the Boers upon Ladysmith. A certain number of them had been called off into the Orange

Occupation of
Bloemfontein,
March 13.

Buller's last
effort, Feb.
14-28.

State to attempt to save Cronje from his fate. But too much stress has been laid upon this; there were still abundance of burghers left to hold the Colenso position which had hitherto proved impregnable.



Walker & Cockerell sc.

General Buller had spoken of having found out at last the key of the position, when he occupied Vaalkranz. His words at the time were over sanguine, but a few weeks later a fresh effort was made, and the words proved true. Much hard work and hard fighting had

changed the untried lads of a few months before into an army of veterans; he could now venture to undertake what he had then shrunk from, an attack upon the weak point in the Boer position, their eastern or left flank. At Colenso the river Tugela makes a sharp angle to the north and then again resumes its south-easterly course. This crook in the river was occupied by the Hlangwana Hill. The Boers had been allowed to cross the river and fortify this hill, which thus formed the eastern end of their position. The defenders of the hill would, if it was assaulted, have the disadvantage of fighting with the river behind them, and there would necessarily be some difficulty in reinforcing them. If captured, the hill enfladed and commanded the whole Colenso position. It was to effect this capture that the army, after a few days of rest and almost at the same time that Cronje's forces were entangled at Paardeberg, was launched upon its fourth and final effort to relieve Ladysmith, an effort which entailed fourteen days of constant and costly fighting.

Quite at the extreme left and beyond the lines of the Boers, two hills, Monte Christo and Cingolo, commanded the Hlangwana Hill, just as that hill itself commanded the Colenso position. These two hills were taken with but slight resistance, and on the following day Hlangwana, Feb. 19. (February 19) the enemy was driven from Hlangwana itself. It would seem that there was a general belief, in which Buller shared, that this capture was so decisive that the enemy would at once withdraw, and that no opposition would be offered except by a weak rearguard; he therefore stopped his flanking movement, brought his troops and guns across the river a little to the north of Colenso, and determined to push his way straight to Ladysmith, following the line of railway. This sanguine view was soon dissipated by bitter experience. Three hills lay across the approach to the city. The assault of the first of these was entrusted to General Hart with the Irish Brigade, and was carried out with desperate bravery (February 22). But the assailants were unable to reach the trenches, and had to content themselves, after the loss of half their number, with holding grimly on, in a position affording some slight shelter about 400 yards from the enemy. Warned, by this check, of the continued difficulty of a direct forward march, General Buller resumed his former strategy, recrossed the river, and again turning the Boer left flank, captured the most eastern of the three hills which, barring the direct advance by the railway, were known as the Pieter's position. The possession of this

hill, as in the case of Hlangwana, rendered the defence of the other two impossible. A simultaneous assault upon them drove the Boers to flight, and for the first time since the operations had begun victory fell to the lot of the British.

Pieter's Hill,
Feb. 27.

The hope of saving Ladysmith was on the point of realisation. It was even nearer than either troops or general imagined. The wide plain which spread from the back of the

Relief of Lady-
smith.

Pieter's position was intersected by ridges, and the great Bulwana mountain overhanging Ladysmith was still in the hands of the enemy. Another great battle seemed necessary. But in truth the Boers had been thoroughly beaten and understood their defeat; they were rapidly withdrawing with all their wagons and guns. The English cavalry advancing to reconnoitre found no obstacle in the way, and Lord Dundonald, galloping forward with a few squadrons, was able to join hands with the enfeebled but steadfast garrison (February 28). The relief came none too soon; 118 days of constant bombardment, aggravated by semi-starvation and the ravages of enteric fever, had so weakened the garrison that at the close of the siege no more than 2000 men, described as tottering under the weight of their rifles, could be collected to keep up even a semblance of pursuit upon the retiring Boers. Among the many glorious recollections of the British army the lengthened defence of Ladysmith will always find a place. Sir George White, when once he had determined that the proper strategy to adopt was to hold the town and thus to keep the enemies employed who would otherwise have overrun South Natal, conducted the defence with great skill, and was well seconded by the courage of his troops and the patience of the residents. On first finding himself compelled to fall back and occupy the town, he had thought of attempting offensive measures of defence. But warned by his ill success at Nicholson's Nek (October 30), he contented himself with occupying a widespread defensive position, and there awaited relief. It is said that 16,000 shells fell within the lines. The inhabitants found shelter in holes dug in the banks of the river. The number of men admitted to the hospital during the investment nearly equalled the number of the whole beleaguered army. Before the relief arrived ammunition was running short, and even the supply of horse flesh was failing. Several assaults had been repulsed. One of these, on the 6th of January, when the hills to the south of the position were attacked with a desperate bravery which threatened for a while to be successful, was one of the few instances of close personal fighting which occurred during the war. If the tenacity and courage of the besieged had been great, the loss of the relieving army tells a tale of

persistent bravery in the face of overwhelming difficulties. The loss in killed and wounded in Buller's army during its four attempts was more than 5000, nearly 20 per cent. of its whole number. Questions may be raised as to the wisdom of the strategy and tactics employed; but it remains certain that the greatest difficulty of the whole war had been successfully encountered, and that the General retained to the end the confidence and admiration of his troops.

The pursuit was not pressed. The Boers withdrew with baggage and artillery to a position on the Biggarsberg south of Laing's Nek. Thither Buller followed them, and after three months, during which he was awaiting the developments of the war in the Orange State, by some well-arranged movements he brought his army into the Transvaal and compelled the further withdrawal of the enemy (June 12).

Meanwhile the enforced idleness of the army at Bloemfontein encouraged the Free Staters to resume the offensive. The scene of their activity was in the south and east, where Christian De Wet first gave proof of his extraordinary ability as a partisan leader. The advance of Lord Roberts had allowed the British troops in the north of Cape Colony to push across the Orange river. At Bethulie the bridge, saved by the gallantry of Captain Popham and Lieutenant Grant, who succeeded in withdrawing dynamite charges placed for its destruction, was used by General Gatacre in his advance to Springfontein, while Colonel Brabant with the Colonial troops (March 11) crossed at Aliwal, and sending forward part of his force along the Basuto border, occupied Wepener. From Bloemfontein itself a force had proceeded eastward, had captured the waterworks, about 25 miles from the city, and still pushing forward had occupied Thabanchu. The north-eastern districts of the Orange State were still occupied by the Boer commandos. Towards the end of March they began to renew their activity. Colonel Broadwood was compelled to retire from Thabanchu, and crossing as he believed in perfect safety the plain which led to Bloemfontein, suddenly found himself in an ambush carefully laid in the bed of a stream, at Sannah's Post, and there lost 180 wagons of his convoy, 7 guns, and 426 prisoners. Worse than the actual loss was the occupation by the Boers of the waterworks, obliging as it did the troops in Bloemfontein to use the inferior water of the town, and thus adding fresh violence to the outbreak of enteric fever already raging.

Sannah's Post,
March 31.

Reddersburg,
April 4.

Four days later a party of about 2000 of the same troops who had ambushed Broadwood, passing southward, surrounded a detachment, consisting of three companies of Irish

Rifles and two of mounted infantry, drawn from General Gatacre's force, and compelled them to surrender at Reddersburg. The disaster at Sannah's Post and the withdrawal of General Colville's division from Thabanchu had left these companies uncovered. They were ordered to withdraw, and during the operation were surrounded by the Boers. Without guns, without water, and having lost most of their officers, the men, after holding out for two days upon some kopjes which they had occupied, were driven to surrender. Though General Gatacre, on receiving information of their danger, had collected troops with extreme rapidity for their rescue, he was too late, and 550 more prisoners fell into the hands of the Boers. It was a most disastrous week. But at least it taught the English that the country was not yet conquered, that it was unsafe to wander in small detachments, and that some concentration for defence was a matter of necessity.

One characteristic in the generalship of Lord Roberts was his capacity for disregarding small reverses, and of fixing his attention upon the great essentials. As the loss of his convoy had in no wise checked his march upon Bloemfontein, so now, in spite of Sannah's Post and Reddersburg, he continued unmoved to prepare for his advance to Pretoria. The Orange Free State was declared to be annexed to the British empire, and became the Orange River Colony. Bloemfontein was organised as a British possession. A proclamation was issued offering protection to such Boers as would give a declaration of neutrality. It was the first instance of an error which seems to have gone hand in hand with Lord Roberts' brilliant strategy. He seems to have misapprehended the fundamental difference which exists between the defeat of organised opposition and the occupation of a conquered country. It proved impossible to give effect to the promises of the Proclamation. In innumerable instances neutral Boers, who had surrendered under its provisions, were attacked by the scattered forces of the enemy, and, finding themselves unprotected, joined the ranks of their belligerent fellow-countrymen. On many of these occasions their conduct was no doubt forced upon them; but a door was opened for fictitious surrenders to be recalled when the immediate danger from the British troops was withdrawn, and the country behind the advancing army remained in the occupation of covert enemies.

Before the actual forward movement began, an attempt was made to envelop a portion of De Wet's troops, who, a few days after their success at Reddersburg, had

**Annexation of
the Orange
State.**

**Relief of We-
pener, April 25.**

attempted a similar stroke upon Brabant's troops in Wepener. The Colonials, of whom the garrison consisted, being well led by Major Dalgety, and well supplied, found no great difficulty in repelling all assaults and in holding their position for seventeen days. Lord Roberts hoped to enclose and capture the Boer commandos who were thus held in a state of inactivity. Columns from several directions were turned upon them, and Ian Hamilton with a force consisting chiefly of mounted infantry pushed forward to Thabanchu to cut off their retreat. But De Wet, to whom every inhabitant served as an intelligence agent, found no difficulty on this occasion as on so many others in avoiding the snare, and withdrew into safety. But even this futile attempt was worked into the general plan. Ian Hamilton's force, now raised to some 13,000 men, became at once the right wing of the main army, which began its great advance on May 1.

The movement was extraordinarily rapid. It was Ian Hamilton's duty, acting on the right, to turn each position as it was occupied by the enemy. The strategy was completely successful. With nearly constant fighting, but without any general engagements, the army swept on. The enemy withdrew from position after position. Kroonstad, where the Government of the Orange State had taken refuge, was occupied on the 12th. A week's halt was allowed, and then the rapid march was resumed, till on the 26th and 27th the Vaal river was crossed and the Transvaal itself invaded. General French, and Ian Hamilton, who had now moved across the main army to the left flank, drove back the enemy from their last position at Doornkop on the Klip river, and on May 31st Lord Roberts with his troops, having marched 130 miles in seven days, entered Johannesburg. They were still 30 miles from the capital, which was known to be defended by very formidable works. Fortunately these were not held, and after a very slight resistance, on the 5th of June, the army marched into Pretoria. The second capital was thus occupied. Perhaps the pleasantest fruit of the victory was the liberation of the 130 officers from the Pretoria prison, and of the 3000 soldiers whom a rapid rush of a body of cavalry released from Waterval, some 14 miles to the north.

In his advance on Pretoria Lord Roberts had included the relief of Mafeking. There, from the first breaking out of the war, the little garrison under command of Colonel Baden-Powell had been offering a determined and spirited resistance. Attempts to relieve it had been made by Colonel Plumer from the north, but had not as yet proved successful. An expedition of mounted

Advance to
Pretoria, May 1
to June 5.

Relief of
Mafeking.

troops under Colonel Mahon was now organised with extreme secrecy, and succeeded in making its way into Mafeking on the 17th of May, and compelling the withdrawal of the besiegers. The gallant defence of the place and the resourceful character of the commander had fixed the attention of the people of England upon the little town. Its fate and the incidents of the siege had been watched with extraordinary interest, and the news of its relief was received with an outburst of riotous and enthusiastic joy somewhat out of proportion to the real importance of the event.

Although Lord Roberts had now secured the two capitals, which in an ordinary war of the European type would probably have brought the struggle to a conclusion, his position Second phase
of the war. was one of great danger. The very rapidity of his success had aggravated the difficulty; for, unbroken by any crushing defeat, and wisely avoiding the temptation of holding out in their towns against an overwhelming enemy, the Boers had fallen back upon a form of warfare for which they were much better fitted than for the great operations of war. An unbeaten force of Free Staters occupied the north-east of the Orange State, under the command of De Wet, Olivier, and Prinsloo. Lord Roberts' communications (most slenderly held) were at once exposed to their dashing strategy, while their threatening approach to the colonial frontier on the south was with difficulty checked by the dispersed forces of Rundle and Brabant. And at the same time all around Pretoria Lord Roberts had to face the equally unbeaten forces of the Transvaal, ready at any moment to undertake offensive operations. The existence of the danger soon became evident. De Wet played havoc upon the railway, and for some days the force at Pretoria was absolutely isolated. His various attacks (at Lindley, May 31, at Roodival, June 7, and at Rhenoster, June 14) caused the unfortunate loss of a large body of Yeomanry which had been by some error left unsupported at Lindley, and of a regiment of Militia at Roodival; while the railway was entirely broken up and all communication with Cape Colony for the time rendered impossible. These events, disastrous and disheartening as they were, had however no effect upon the general course of the war. Before the advance of Lord Methuen from the west with a force of 6000 men, the active partisan leader retired to join the bulk of his compatriots in the north-east.

A second danger calling for more energetic treatment menaced the army at Pretoria. The presence of an unbeaten enemy within fifteen miles was a standing threat which could not be tolerated. On the 11th of June the army pushed out eastward, and one of the most

considerable battles of the war was fought at Diamond Hill. The operations covered a line of 16 miles, and resolved themselves into three distinct combats. Victory was secured and the position cleared by the success of Ian Hamilton upon the right. A combat of two days' duration, during which the guns were at one time in extreme jeopardy and saved only by brilliant cavalry charges, placed his force upon the plateau which crowned the Boer position. The gallant conduct of the 82nd Battery, which in the face of a tremendous fire took up and held a position within 1200 yards of the enemy, saved a situation which might otherwise have proved critical. Lord Roberts was now able to give his troops the necessary rest, and gradually to extend his right until Ian Hamilton, passing through Heilbron, could join hands with Buller, who with the Natal forces had been gradually working northwards after his successful passage of the mountains. The armies of the Orange State and the Transvaal were thus separated, and the ground was being cleared for separate action against them.

Both operations were successful. The first, as was natural because it tended to the safety of the communications, was directed against the Orange Staters who, under De Wet, Prinsloo, Olivier, and De Villiers were occupying the inaccessible hill country along the Basuto border between Ficksburg and Bethlehem. Against these troops six columns were converged, and gradually closed in upon them. At length, after constant fighting, the commandos were surrounded near Fouriesburg in the Caledon Valley, but not before the indefatigable De Wet had broken from them, rushed rapidly northward, and made his appearance upon the railway at Vredefort. Those who remained were driven to an unconditional surrender, on the 30th of July. It seemed however that Prinsloo had gone somewhat beyond his authority. At all events Olivier with 1500 men broke away from the main body and escaped. The surrendered troops numbered nearly 5000, with 3 guns. The great advantage strategically of this capture was the opening of the railway through Van Reenen's Pass into Natal, which enabled supplies to be brought direct from Durban.

Prinsloo's surrender at Fouriesburg, July 30.

Apart from local disturbances which were constantly arising in all parts of the country, the war had been at length concentrated in the Transvaal. But before moving forward, and while waiting for the arrival of fresh horses, Lord Roberts had to beat off attacks all round Pretoria. For General Botha appears to have intended to use the enforced idleness of the British commander to execute a combined attack upon the town. As a part of this plan De la Rey was sent

into the western districts, where he proved a most active and unconquerable enemy. So large a movement was really beyond the powers of the Boers; their assaults were insufficient to detain Lord Roberts. He only waited to secure his communications and to make one more attempt to capture De Wet and the commandos which had escaped from Fouriesburg. Close pursuit rendered De Wet's return southward impossible, and drove him to adopt what appeared the foolhardy determination to push through the Transvaal and join his friends to the north of Pretoria. For the moment it seemed that his enterprise must fail, and the hope of his capture rose high as he approached the Magaliesberg ridge to the west of Pretoria, which still separated him from the district in the occupation of De la Rey. There were but three passes over the ridge, and they were believed to be in British hands. Methuen stopped him on the west, Kitchener and Broadwood were pursuing him from the south, Pretoria closed the east. From this desperate position however he again managed to extricate himself, and with ex-President Steyn, who had constantly accompanied him, escaped from the trap. He sent Steyn eastward; and after awhile found means to return, with a few followers, over the mountains into the Orange State.

Attempts to
capture De
Wet.

De Wet was for the time no longer formidable; he had lost nearly all his baggage and supplies during the long and close pursuit; and though De la Rey was still active in the west, it was now possible to undertake what was regarded as a final movement. General Buller came up from the south, while Lord Roberts pushed along the railway line to meet him. The same strategy was adopted as on the advance to Pretoria. The army, occupying a spread of nearly 30 miles, consisted as before of a centre and wings thrown far out to the right and left. It was not without some fighting, notably at Bergendal, that the line was gradually cleared. On the 28th of August Buller occupied Machadodorp, where for many weeks President Kruger and the movable Government of the Transvaal had been living in railway carriages, ready as the President declared to move westward. On the 30th the British prisoners who had been kept at Noitgedacht were liberated, and it was determined to advance against Lydenburg, where it had been always thought possible that the Boers would make their final stand. Again there was opposition, again it faded before flank attacks, and on the 6th of September Lydenburg was occupied. Five days later General Buller was as far north as Spitzkop, while more to the south Barberton, the great railway junction, was occupied by French. On the 11th President Kruger

Lord Roberts'
final move-
ment.

arrived at Lorenzo Marques, having at length despaired of his country and determined to withdraw to Europe. Confused fighting still continued in many directions, especially in the west. But the occupation (September 24) of Komatipoort, the frontier station on the railway, and the withdrawal into Portuguese territory of General Piennaar with 2000 men marked the close of the first stage of the war.

In fact Lord Roberts believed, and declared his belief, that the war **Supposed end of the war.** was ended. It was under this impression that on the

1st of September he had issued an important proclamation pointing out the hopelessness of the Boer cause, and threatening strong repressive measures if, the real war being ended, the defence should sink into a wild and irregular guerilla warfare. His attitude, and his declaration that the war was ended, in the light of subsequent events was open to much adverse criticism. Yet in fact it was true. If by war is meant the struggle of armies bound by the habits and practices which attend civilized warfare, the war was at an end. But to conquer in a war, and to conquer a brave people determined not to be subdued are two very different things. For nearly two years longer the whole power of England was kept upon the stretch in the effort of its armies to occupy and hold the land which they had nominally won. Indeed before that consummation could be arrived at, the often repeated demand for unconditional surrender had to be withdrawn. It was upon terms by no means dishonourable to themselves that the fighting remnant of Boer patriots at length accepted the supremacy of Great Britain.

The second act, if it may be so called, of the war, the gradual acquisition and occupation of the country, was left to Lord Kitchener, whose complete and elaborate military processes well fitted him for such a duty. It was only by the erection of lines of blockhouses, connected by thousands of miles of barbed wire entanglement, that the conquered country was gradually appropriated. This work, which at last convinced the Boers of the impossibility of further resistance and led to the conclusion of peace (June 1, 1902), and the still more

The reconstruction left to Lord Milner. interesting work of restoration of the devastated country and the repatriation of the captive and exiled inhabitants, carried out apparently with exemplary care and wisdom by Lord Milner and those working under him, do not fall within the limits of this history.

It was in the belief that his work was fully accomplished that Lord **Lord Roberts' return.** Roberts returned to England; and it was as the successful vindicator of the honour of the empire that he

was received by the aged Queen. He came home to have honours heaped on him. He was made an earl; he was given the Order of the Garter. He was summoned to a special audience at Windsor. Always popular, he now became the darling hero of the people, and was received wherever he went with enthusiastic welcome. It was not merely his popularity and his success which made his home-coming welcome. He was at once to take up the office of Commander-in-Chief, which increasing infirmities compelled Lord Wolseley to resign, and in that office great things were both hoped and expected from him. Successful though on the whole the army had been, there had been times of most depressing disaster. Nor could the nation flatter itself that the organising authority on which the action of the army depended was at all to be trusted. There were incidents enough in the course of the war to fill men's minds with a total want of confidence in the administration. Even the speeches of Lord Wolseley himself tended to the belief that reconstitution in some form or other was much wanted. Though he assumed the usual official tone in parts of his speeches, declared his admiration of what has been done, and his belief in the army system as established by Mr. Cardwell, he had admitted the difficulty under which the Commander-in-Chief laboured from the subordination of his opinion to the exigencies of politics or of the Treasury. As the new Secretary at War, Mr. St. John Brodrick, soon after his appointment in November, declared that he hoped his own experience as Under Secretary might "prove a useful adjunct to those inspirations which, after the greatest campaign of our generation, would be afforded him by the greatest soldier of our age," it was expected that the voice of the new Commander-in-Chief would prove more potent in the great process of reorganisation than had apparently been the case with his predecessor.

Expected re-
form at the
War Office.

The delay of the Government to carry out according to promise a searching public inquiry into the conduct of the War Office during the earlier months of the war, caused much disappointment. Public disapproval was strongly expressed and seemed to be increasing; and in this may probably be found one of the reasons which induced Lord Salisbury to dissolve Parliament in September, at a moment when circumstances seemed scarcely to justify such a step. His majority was still unbroken, and there were reasons connected with the registration which should have postponed the dissolution. There seemed in fact no real ground for dissolving Parliament. Yet the Government can scarcely be blamed for taking advantage of any opportunity to secure for themselves a lengthened

General elec-
tion, Oct. 1900.

tenure of office in which to complete the war they had begun. It was natural that they should wish to stifle under the wave of enthusiasm caused by Lord Roberts' success the rising voice of discontent at the serious miscarriages which from time to time had marked the conduct of the war. Therefore, although the dissolution seemed unnecessary, for there were practically but few of the opposition leaders who were inclined to recommend any other course than the prosecution of the war to a triumphant close, the Government succeeded in giving to their appeal to the people the character of a demand for a fresh mandate to complete the war. It suited the Unionists to raise the cry, to which Mr. Chamberlain somewhat unjustifiably lent his support, that "to vote against the Government was to vote for the Boers," a cry which found an echo in the prevalent sentiment, and secured to the party in power a fresh tenure of office and a Parliamentary majority of more than 130.

It was thought advisable to make a few changes in the Ministry. Mr. St. John Brodrick, who had shown some practical capacity and some debating power in his position as Under Secretary, was placed at the War Office. Lord Selborne, whose love of politics had led him at one time to suggest that Peers should if they pleased be allowed to seek seats in the Lower House, and who was a man of much strong sense, was put at the Admiralty. The world was not surprised that Lord Salisbury should confess the approach of age and withdraw from the personal charge of the Foreign Office; but it was not without some misgiving and some astonishment that it saw the vacant post occupied by Lord Lansdowne, the man whose management of the War Office had certainly not been regarded generally as a successful piece of work. The changes necessitated the withdrawal from public life of several of the old leaders who had during the generation which was passing away played a prominent part among the Unionists. Of these the most important was Mr. Goschen, whose administration of the Admiralty had always won the approbation both of the service and of the country at large, and whose consistent maintenance of his own views and courageous and outspoken if somewhat perfervid patriotism had gained for him the general respect. It was with flattering words of kindness and regret that the Queen accepted the retirement of her old and faithful servant, and in a touching phrase of sympathy told him that she too was beginning to weary of the burden of duty she had so long borne.

In fact the dark shadow of the approaching end was already closing upon the aged Queen. Early in January 1901 she received Lord

Roberts to a second private audience, and, though with some difficulty, for several hours found strength to carry on the conversation and to hear from him of the great deeds of her troops. A few days later ominous bulletins warned the nation of its approaching loss, and on the 22nd the sad news was spread that the life of the great Queen had ended. Never perhaps did the death of a Monarch call forth such deep-felt and personal sorrow.

The Queen's
death, Jan. 22,
1901.

The extraordinary success with which, in a way which finds no parallel in the history of crowned heads, she had managed to take her people into her confidence and to make them the sharers of her sorrows and joys, had endeared her to every class of the nation. Her ready sympathy with every form of distress, and the kind and gracious words with which she had associated herself with many instances of even private sorrow, had touched in a very peculiar manner the domestic sentiment so strong among the English people. There was scarcely a family which did not feel as though they had lost a relative or friend. The strange, almost inexplicable, feeling of loyalty found in her an object on which it could lavish itself without that touch of incongruity which so often attends it, and could gather fresh food even in an age when criticism is apt to undermine all sentiment.

The Queen's power of exciting and feeling sympathy, though an invaluable element of greatness in a constitutional monarch, was by no means her only gift. It was alluded to by all the statesmen whose duty it was to give utterance to the national feeling when the new Parliament assembled. But in every case there was mingled with it a recognition of the greatness of the Queen in the execution of her duties as a ruler. The world is too ready to confuse the constitutional monarch with the *roi fainéant*, to regard him as an ornamental appendage, whose duties are chiefly social, and whose energies are wasted in bestowing an air of grace and dignity to national celebrations and traditional ceremonies; the real work of government is, according to common belief, entirely in the hands of the responsible Ministers. If this is ever true, it was certainly not true in the case of Queen Victoria. The work of the constitutional monarch is of necessity behind the veil; it is none the less vast in amount and charged with the gravest importance. It is only now and then, when a biography of some great Minister or intimate friend of the sovereign affords a passing glimpse of the inner working of the Government, that the true position of the Head of the Empire is made known to the world. Such a revelation comes as a surprise. The

Appreciation
of the Queen.

amount of labour required of the sovereign and the influence which he is able to exert, are nothing short of astonishing. No monarch ever discharged the onerous duties of the crown more conscientiously or more loyally than Queen Victoria. She was kept informed of all the intricacies of party warfare. Day by day the Prime Minister was required to furnish her with a written account of the political situation and of the course of the debates in Parliament. Every paper of importance was laid before her. And with her it was no mere question of the appending of her signature; she required of her servants an exact and complete explanation of every subject presented to her. There was no step taken, whatever the complexion of the Ministry might be, without her full knowledge. There was no difficulty in which she was not consulted; there were few in which her advice was not of the greatest value. Again and again hitches in the Cabinet were smoothed out by her resourceful suggestions; more than once the knots of international diplomacy were unravelled by her skill. And although she was consistently faithful to that Ministry which the desire of the nation had for the time placed in office, there is no question but that their action was influenced by her personal opinion, and by the wisdom which was the fruit of her long experience.

It was with a deep recognition of this side of the Queen's character that Mr. Balfour, in moving the Address in reply to a message from the King, closed his speech with these words: "It is not given to a constitutional monarch to signalise his reign by any great isolated action. The effect of a constitutional sovereign, great as it is, is produced by the slow, constant, and cumulative results of a great ideal and a great example; and of that great ideal and that great example Queen Victoria surely was the first of all constitutional monarchs whom the world has yet seen." After dwelling impressively on her life of continuous labour, he added: "Short as was the interval between the last public document and her final rest, it was yet long enough to clog the wheels of administration; and when I saw the vast mass of untouched documents which awaited the hand of the sovereign of this country to deal with, it was brought vividly before my mind how admirable was the unostentatious patience with which for sixty-three years, through sorrow, through suffering, in moments of weariness, in moments it may be of despondency, she carried on without intermission her share in the government of this great empire. She had her reward in the undying affection and immemorial recollection of all her subjects. She passed away without an enemy in the world, for even

**Mr. Balfour's
speech,
Jan. 25.**

those who loved not England loved her. No such reign, no such ending has been known in our history before."

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, in seconding the motion, alluded to the personal character of the Queen. "There was Campbell-Bannerman. between her and her people a friendly, tender, almost familiar, mutual understanding, which it is almost impossible to put into words. Who can measure the strength which the existence of a relation such as this between the Sovereign and her people must have given through all these years to this kingdom and this empire?"

Lord Rosebery, in speaking to the governors of the Royal Scottish Hospital in London, on the 30th of January, said:

"I venture to say that there is not an intelligent home Lord Rosebery. throughout the world that has not been profoundly moved by the death of this illustrious woman. Probably every subject in Great Britain realises that he has lost his greatest and his best friend. But they do not understand of what enormous weight in the councils of the world we are deprived by the death of our late Sovereign." And then after speaking of her vast personal influence in every country in Europe, he asked, "Can we not realise, then, what a force the personal influence of such a Sovereign must have been in the troubled councils of Europe? And when, as we know, that influence was always given for peace, for freedom, and for good government, we feel that not merely ourselves but all the world has lost one of its best friends. She saw that the essential dignity of the throne does not lie in pomps and palaces, but in the dignity of supreme example; and the watchwords of her life, so far as we could discern them, were duty and sympathy."

Her personal and religious character was well summed up by the Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking in the House of Archbishop of Canterbury. Lords on the 25th of January. "For myself it is impossible to look back over her reign without a deep sense of gratitude to God for having given us such a Sovereign to reign over us, a Sovereign whose powers of statesmanship and powers of advising those who had the government in their hands have been already spoken of, but whose influence as a woman, and I may add as a truly religious woman, was far greater than anything which could be exercised by the wisest statesman. Her influence, the character of her Court, the character of the domestic life (of which her subjects were allowed to know something) had a penetrating power which reached far beyond the possibility of our being able to trace it. There can be no question that all society has been the better because the Queen has reigned."

The striking words of Lord Salisbury form a fitting close to this

chorus of appreciative love and admiration. "We owe her gratitude in every direction, for her influence in elevating the people, for her power with foreign Courts and Sovereigns to remove difficulties and misapprehension which sometimes might have been dangerous; but above all things we owe her gratitude for this, that by a happy dispensation her reign has coincided with that great change which has come over the political structure of this country and the political instincts of its people. She has bridged over that great interval which separates old England from new England. Other nations may have had to pass through similar trials, but have seldom passed through them so peaceably, so easily, and with so much prosperity and success as we have. I think that future historians will look to the Queen's reign as the boundary which separates the two states of England, England which has changed so much, and recognise that we have undergone the change with constant increase of public prosperity, without any friction to endanger the peace or stability of our civil life, and at the same time with a constant expansion of an empire which every year grows more and more powerful. We owe all these blessings to the tact, the wisdom, the passionate patriotism, and the incomparable judgment of the Sovereign whom we deplore."

It is consonant with her readiness to apprehend the national feeling, so well described by Lord Salisbury, that the imperial instinct had of late years been strongly roused in her. She loved to think of herself as the Empress of India. The growth and expansion of the empire appealed to her closely, and whatever may have been her personal sorrows or her personal weariness, the last year of her life must have been full of satisfaction to her as a Queen. Almost the last Bill to which she put her signature was that for creating the great Commonwealth of Australia. The position of England in South Africa must have appeared to her assured. Her two great Jubilees of 1887 and 1897 had foreshadowed the close connection of the Colonies with the mother country, which the events of the Boer War had so thoroughly realised. The risk, which we cannot but suppose to have been great in her eyes, of some disturbance at least in the unity of the empire by the triumph of Home Rule, seemed to have disappeared. She had been able to visit Ireland in the spring of 1900 and to receive there a friendly, almost enthusiastic, welcome; while her reception in her state progresses through London must have told her very plainly how deep-rooted and sincere was the love of her people, how strong the first link in the chain which bound the empire together.

The eloquent words of those to whose lot it fell to express the

national feeling on the Queen's death were conceived in an optimistic spirit befitting the solemn occasion. A spirit of hope and self-reliance well becomes the leaders of a people at the opening of a new era. Yet there are certain facts in nearly every sphere of English life which must lead the observer to ask himself whether the late reign, great as it was, is to be regarded as a beginning or as an end; whether it marks a step in the development of even greater progress, or the summit of achievement in which signs of deterioration are already visible. The enormous increase of the empire, and the incredible accumulation of wealth, are themselves causes of deep anxiety. Whether Great Britain is still capable of expanding, or even of maintaining its existing expansion, or whether the hour has arrived when, as in other empires, the very greatness of its acquisitions and its wealth tends to overstrain its strength, and leads towards a course of decadence, is a question not to be hurriedly decided.

Causes for anxiety.

The province of history is neither to prophesy nor to encourage, but to note characteristic facts and tendencies. The one thing which makes itself obvious in the closing years of the late reign is the setting in of a strong tide of reaction, visible in nearly every branch of life. It is impossible to say whether this arises from a wise effort to check the over rapid growth of democracy, or merely from the swing of the pendulum and the reversion of popular feeling to the ordinary unthinking impulses of human nature, after a period dominated by principles often abstract in character and requiring much thought for their comprehension. The existence of the reaction however remains a fact. Ambition and the love of rule, belief in extended empire, in restricted and selfish commerce, in the superiority of a military life, in the value and importance of the privileged classes, and the substitution of symbolism for higher spiritual creeds, are marked characteristics of the time, and are exactly those things which the last century prided itself on having left behind.

Signs of reaction.

The desire for the acquisition of territory, the belief in the advantages of extended, rather than concentrated and well-ruled dominion, which prevailed in the eighteenth century, has again made its appearance. Spheres of influence, chartered companies, annexation of savage lands, reappear as prominent features of political life. The public has again become nervously sensitive at any fancied loss of prestige, a well-known feature of what is generally spoken of as a bygone time. The whole system of commercial economy has begun to be questioned. The free-trade doctrines, under which the country has grown great, are spoken of in the leading organs

Desire for increased territory.

of the Press as "antiquated shibboleths." The principles of the great financiers, who for many years have been regarded with practical unanimity as unquestioned authorities, are forced again to pass through the crucible of inquiry. The exclusion, as far as possible, of foreign competition is becoming a widespread object of desire. Nor is this exclusiveness confined to commerce. Those very combinations which had their origin in the democratic desire for the improvement of the working classes have in too many instances become institutions directed chiefly to the shortening of the working hours of the favoured few, and the exclusion from employment of all who decline to join their societies.

But perhaps the most obvious signs of the reaction are to be found in the changed relation between the two Houses of Parliament, and in the attitude of the English Church. Only a few years before the close of the reign it was a fixed belief that the centre of political power lay entirely in the House of Commons. So completely was this the case, that any opposition on the part of the Lords came almost as a surprise, and elicited the strongest denunciations. The abolition or the thorough reform of the Upper House was thought to be the best party cry for a general election. Under the skilful hands of Lord Salisbury the position has been largely changed. Places of trust abroad have been uniformly placed in the hands of young noblemen; the most important posts in the Ministry are held by members of the Upper House. Its constitutional position has been completely vindicated. Whether for good or evil the political power of the privileged class has been restored. Unquestionably the estimation of the House of Commons has been lowered; obstruction, disorder, the want of party discipline, and the disintegration of parties, have gone far to deprive it of its commanding position. It is unfortunate that the influence thus lost has passed into the hands of a class which represents little except property, and that thus there seems some danger of the constitution degenerating into a mere plutocracy. Going hand in hand with the vast accumulation of wealth, this political movement has produced a state of things in which the mere possession of riches has become a source of political and social power.

When the majority of the English clergy are avowedly determined to reproduce the ritual of the seventeenth century or of an earlier time, when a considerable number even of the laity reject with indignation the time-honoured appellation of Protestant, it is needless to enlarge upon the reactionary spirit which is visible in the Church of England. It would appear to be a natural consequence of this, that in spite of many well-meant efforts of individual prelates

and clergymen to soften the line which separates the Christian churches, there was never a period when the antagonism between the English Church and the Nonconformists was more strongly marked. It does not tend to the healing of this dislocation that a large body of enlightened Churchmen have adopted in many respects the liberal views which marked the Broad Church in the middle of the last century. Liberality of doctrine and of criticism are useless as solvents of religious differences so long as they go hand-in-hand with medieval ritual and claims to exclusive privilege.

Another point which must be noticed, and which is probably dependent upon the increased wealth of the country, is the *Love of* extraordinary love of amusement. It is difficult to resist *amusement.* the belief that this excited pursuit of relaxation has been accompanied with a loss of serious interest in the more real work of life. The steady perseverance which comes from a keen interest in the work in hand, whatever the work may be, appears to be lessening. Work seems to be regarded chiefly as an evil, to be limited to certain not very long hours, the remainder of the day and night being devoted to amusement. Probably in gay society this has been always more or less the case; a black mark has always been set against what is called "shop." But the sharp line dividing the real objects of life, the labour and employment by which men live, from those lighter pursuits which are supposed to make life more pleasant, has been constantly extended, and has been adopted by class after class until it has now reached the ordinary working man. The effect of this has been remarkable. The love of pleasure and excitement, acting in connection with some other causes, has played a great part in changing the entire character of English rural life; the agricultural labourer of the last century has almost disappeared. There are many villages in which young men or even men of middle age are scarcely to be found; the work is carried on by old men, and by lads waiting their opportunity to follow their predecessors into the cities. The fresh young countrymen appear to find no difficulty in getting good and lucrative employment in the cities. But there seems to be a considerable body of evidence to support the view that town life produces in them a gradual deterioration, and that after a few generations they become weak and puny. The evil is one which reproduces itself; it is the place of the weakling which is occupied by the new arrival, while his predecessor is too apt to slide into the class which just keeps itself alive in casual employment, or lower still either by unfitness or unwillingness to work into the class of the habitually unemployed. The tendency to drift away from the country to the

towns seems irresistible ; the efforts constantly made to replace the labourer on the soil have hitherto proved ineffective. Taken together with the changed conditions of agriculture, and the fall of prices consequent upon foreign competition, it has gone far to deprive England of its character as an agricultural country, and still further to confirm it in its position as a great industrial centre depending entirely upon its manufactures and its trade.

**Desertion of
country for
town.**

A smaller but not unimportant sign of the reaction towards the habits of past times is to be found in the change which has taken place in the estimation of the military life. No doubt this is largely due to the outbreak of a considerable war. War, which is in fact a return to the crudest forms of savage life, addresses itself with extraordinary power to the commonest sentiments and passions of mankind. The craft and skill of the warrior, his strength and endurance, speak directly to that very large part of man's nature which has immediate reference to his physical frame. The warlike temperament is ingrained in the English nation, and in times of peace finds its expression in the mimic warfare of those athletic sports which, whether wisely or unwisely, fill so large a space in the interests of the ordinary Englishman. But civilisation, the introduction, that is, of mind into the life of society, tends to relegate to its proper place this essentially physical attraction. It begins to be recognised, as civilisation advances, that the arts of peace as they are called, the management of men and the conquest of the forces of nature, stand altogether upon a higher plane. The duty of defence, and the virtues which are called out by war, are acknowledged, the great military deeds of their ancestors play an ennobling and inspiring part in the formation of patriotic citizens ; but war is regarded as an unmitigated evil, and the actual profession of arms as a necessary but not very desirable branch in the general system of division of labour. England had advanced far on this line of thought. To many minds it was felt that the greatest misfortune which could happen to the country would have been the introduction of what was spoken of as Continental militarism. England did not stand alone in this. The very countries which felt obliged to maintain them, were conscious that these vast armaments were an anachronism. At the instigation of the Czar of Russia an important Conference was held at the Hague, with the hope of making possible the diminution of armies and the establishment of arbitration. Though some regulation of the methods of war tending to lessen its miseries resulted, and though the general desire to avoid war produced a machinery by which

**Admiration for
military life.**

its outbreak might occasionally be avoided, the effect of the Conference was not very pronounced. It was evident that war was still at times inevitable. Unfortunately just such a war, which to the majority appeared inevitable, and which called out a general enthusiasm and self-devotion unknown for several generations, obliterated for the time the more thoughtful view. The excellence of the military life has become a constant theme for eulogy. Conscription has been freely talked of, not only as necessary but as desirable, and men have fallen back to what must be regarded as an opinion properly belonging to the Middle Ages, that the highest and noblest of professions is that of a soldier.

Failure of the
Hague Con-
ference.

Taking a wider view, the changed position of England among the countries of the world is striking. Prosperity has produced its inevitable results. The earliest country to make use of its natural advantages and its political circumstances, England had become the workshop of the world. Its coal and iron, its easy command of the powers of distribution, and a period of inventive industry fostered by the self-confidence consequent upon the position won in the European wars, and subsequently fed by its advantageous fiscal system, had secured for England an unquestioned pre-eminence as a manufacturing nation. But neither inventive industry nor the skill of the craftsman is the monopoly of any one country. Success engenders both rivalry and imitation. One nation after another found it possible to create for itself those articles for which it was once dependent upon England, and not only to supply its own wants, but to enter into competition in the markets of the world. Rapidity and ease of locomotion has moreover tended to equalise natural advantages. If the liberal and sagacious principles of universal free-trade have found but little favour and few followers, an exclusive fiscal policy has at least attracted capital to protected industries, and thus supplied further means for carrying on the commercial rivalry. England now stands only as one among many great manufacturing nations. It may be perhaps (though this cannot be said with certainty) that in this new attitude England has been too much inclined to rest on its old successes, to ignore the constant onward movement necessary if it is to hold its own in this new position, and to give too little attention to the new powers with which education and science invest the practical pursuit of industrial invention. Though the bulk of British commerce is still enormous, though the shipping business of the world is largely in British hands, it is undeniable that the ingenuity of the Anglo-Saxon has found its highest expression of late years in America,

Changed posi-
tion among
other coun-
tries.

and that it is in Germany that industrial science has found its chief triumphs.

These facts have for some time been apparent, and have naturally disquieted the minds of thinking men. And apart from the obvious advantages to be derived from improved education at home, to many men there has appeared to be an advantage of which England has as yet scarcely made trial in the vast extension of her colonial dominion. It is this which lies at the bottom of that imperial idea of which so much has been said, and in the name of which so much is suggested. At the close of the reign of Queen Victoria the idea was still unformulated. The value set upon the colonies had varied much. There had been times when to all appearance the prevalent feeling was weariness at the necessity of ruling them, and a desire to get rid, as far as possible, of all responsibility connected with them. This feeling took shape in the policy of

Self-government given to the Colonies.

giving the colonies the largest rights of self-government that were compatible with a maintenance of the union. The policy proved to be a wise one. Much of the immediate responsibility of the Home Government was removed; measures of detail, often a cause of friction, were settled by the colonies themselves. At the same time their more independent attitude lent itself to an increase of general prosperity. At a subsequent time the carelessness with which colonial interests had been regarded gave place to a somewhat higher appreciation of their value, which increased as the idea of the imperial responsibility of England began to gain ground. The practical form given to this change of view was closely analogous to that which had preceded it. It was indeed impossible to go backward, or in any way diminish the large measure of self-government which had been already granted. The efforts of those who were most interested in the matter were directed to grouping in federations those colonies which had hitherto been isolated, and thus forming what were, in all but in name, independent states. It was found possible to remove the difficulties which beset such a scheme, both in the case of the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia. Racial jealousy had proved an impassable obstacle in the way of a similar success in South Africa.

The outbreak of the South African War afforded a proof that the policy pursued by England had been successful in attaching the colonies to the mother country. The constitutional freedom so largely granted had not been a useless gift. The great self-governing colonies vied with each other in their readiness to

Loyalty of the Colonies.

assist in supplying the need of Great Britain. Their volunteer troops won for themselves the character of first-rate military material. It was only natural that this fine exhibition of loyalty should lend strength to the idea of the value and possibility of a great unified British empire.

It is not at first sight clear to the ordinary onlooker how colonial federation can lead to the realisation of the hopes of advanced imperialists. Surrounded by a group of self-governing states with only the slightest constitutional connection with the mother country, the exercise of imperial authority by Great Britain in any real sense would seem to be impossible. At best the empire must be merely a federation of states, in which Great Britain may for a while hold the first place. Such federations do not come into existence unless reciprocal advantages can be acquired by the federated states. If Great Britain is to maintain a really imperial position, the motive for closer union as far as the colonies are concerned does not appear a strong one. They already possess in fact all the advantages of independence; the mother country has little or nothing more to give them except a name. The sacrifices which such a federation imply would fall wholly on the colonies. And, beyond the sentiment of empire, the feeling of brotherhood, and that elevation which attends the consciousness of membership of a great nation, there seems nothing particularly attractive in being called upon to contribute largely towards the general defence, or to change fiscal arrangements to suit the mother country, or to take the risk of being involved in complications arising from events on the other side of the world. On the other hand, if a federation of a more equal character is desired, it does not seem an attractive programme for the mother country that, for the purpose of maintaining its predominant position in the world, which may or may not be threatened, it should surrender some of its deepest convictions, and change systems on which it has grown great, with the doubtful advantage of remaining the head of a federation in which the very fact that these changes have been forced upon it will already have shown that it no longer holds an unquestioned predominance.

Doubtful advantages of federation.

Means may perhaps be found to obviate the apparent obstacles and to establish between England and its self-governing colonies different relations to those now existing. If so, and if a united empire, whether distinctly federative or of any other sort, comes into existence, the close of the reign of Queen Victoria will be the close of a complete page of history. In the future it will be the

The British empire.

British Empire and not Great Britain which will occupy the attention of the historian. The words of necessity imply a momentous change.

It remains to be seen whether the movement, which aiming apparently at resuscitating on the broadest basis a national life which in its present form has reached its culminating point and is in risk of sinking, will succeed at all; and granting that it succeeds, whether it will bring with it sooner or later that sort of disintegration which, as the lessons of history seem to show, attends the removal of the seat of national life from the centre to the extremities, or whether it will create a still vaster and nobler world-power than Great Britain has as yet ever been.

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